THE London ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY:

A Family Journal of News, Tales, History, Art, &c.

~~FOR MADELEY, DAWLEY, WELLINGTON, OAKENGATES, ST. GEORGE'S, MUCH WENLOCK, AND SURROUNDING DISTRICTS.~~

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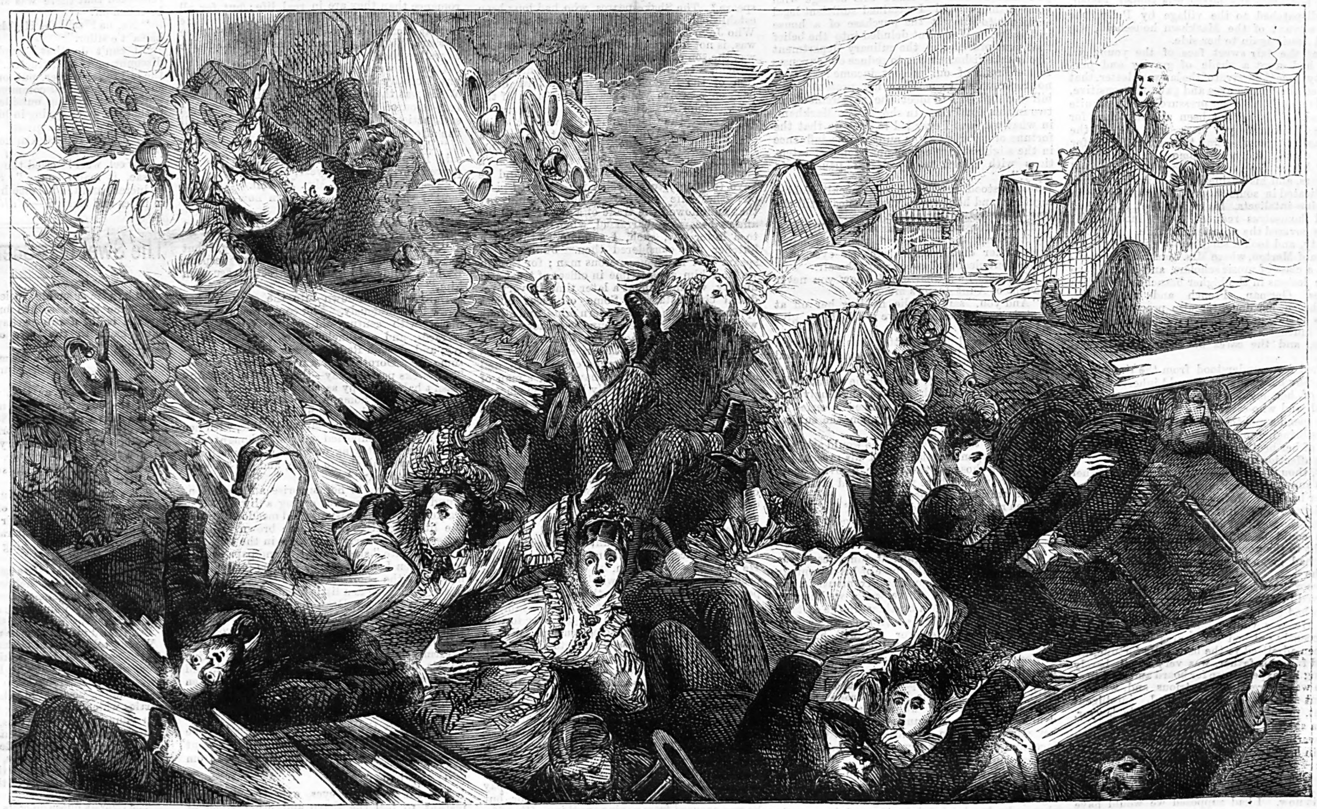
Fall of a Church Parlour Floor.

The New York papers contain accounts of a shocking calamity which occurred recently at the central Baptist Church. During the festival, at which five hundred persons were present, the church parlour floor, forty feet square, in the second storey, gave way, precipitating a number of persons down a fall of fifteen feet, amid broken beams and clouds of suffocating plaster. Fifteen were killed on the spot, and more than one hundred were injured. The fire-alarm was sounded, and thousands of people hurried with the firemen to the scene of the disaster. The crash having put out the gas, the work of rescuing the victims was performed in the dark, or by the help of a few lanterns. The wreck was slowly cleared, the timbers cut, and the sufferers taken out one by one.

The incidents described are of a very harrowing character. One father who joined the rescuers brought a dead child from the wreck, and the light showed it to be his own daughter, whom he supposed safe at home. A young bride had gone down with her husband by her side. She was instantly killed, while he miraculously escaped unhurt. Dr. Wainwright was smothered to death, and it was not expected that his invalid wife would recover from the effects of the injuries she had sustained. Several little girls who were killed were dressed for a "Young Folk's Concert," which was about to begin. Numerous instances of remarkable escapes are narrated.

An examination of the building shows that faulty construction was the cause of the disaster. A few minutes before the floor gave way it trembled so that several persons left the room, fearing an accident which many had predicted. The accident was caused by the giving way of the joists that supported the floor. The joists ran from both sides of the room to a cross stringer, the middle of which was supported by iron rods from the roof. The stringer gave way, pulling the ceiling and roof down upon the people, and precipitating them into the room below. It is scarcely possible to conceive a calamity of the kind occuring under more distressing circumstances.



FALL OF A CHURCH PARLOUR FLOOR.

The Industrious Housewife.

Our first inside illustration represents an industrious housewife in the act of threading or attempting to thread a needle. The feat is not unfrequently trying to the temper, and causes wry faces when the thread is thicker than the needle-eye can conveniently admit. But there is an art in threading a needle as in everything else. There are deft fingers that never linger over the process, while other fingers, not so nimble, take a longer time in the process. The housewife in the illustration has to use a thick thread and a large needle as she is engaged in the homely though needful task of "makin' auld claes look amaist as weel as new." The baby being asleep in the cradle, and the cat on the chair, she is left undisturbed to bring up her leeway in making repairs on her honest and hard-working husband's raiment.

In the Harvest Field.

The engraving with the above title shows us a harvest-working matron resting from her toil to give her baby some needed refreshment; while a sister of the infant is eagerly prying to see if the little one has gone to sleep. For the rural population the harvest-time is the harvest in more senses than one, and even mothers, with babies to nurse, make an effort to assist in gathering in the golden grain. Notwithstanding the trying nature of the toil, when autumnal suns are glowing hotly in the sky, there is a fine picturesqueness in all the operations of the harvest-field, whether the ripe and rustling grain be cut down by the sickle, the scythe, or the more effective reaping-machine.

A German Bier-Garten.

Our last page engraving this week gives a very good idea of the heterogeneous elements that go to form the groups which may be seen in the "Bier-Gartens" (Beer Gardens) of Berlin or any other German town. All classes resort thither, on holidays or during hours of relaxation, as regularly and untiringly as the Parisians do to the boulevards, the cafés, and the theatres. Sitting at a table in the open air, with his meerschaum in his mouth, and a beer-can ready to hand, the German feels as happy as a prince, and gives vent to his glee by singing snatches of the patriotic songs of the Fatherland. The Fraus and Frauleins are quite as fond of visiting the Bier-Gartens as the members of the other sex, and the hilarious sounds they frequently send forth from strong lungs and clear throats may be heard far above all the din of general merry-making. In the United States and other parts of the world, where there are colonies of Germans, the Bier-Garten is an established and inevitable institution. At St. Louis, the capital of Missouri, for example, where the German population is very extensive, and where beer-making ranks third in the productive industries, there are concert gardens attached to many breweries, and these places of recreation are weekly the resort of thousands upon thousands. It is curious that the Teuton and the Gaul, otherwise dissimilar in character and disposition, should both display so much fondness for open-air tippling and diversion.

The Five Hundred Outlaws.

The *Toronto Mail* gives the following account of the expedition which was to start for the North-west in June, and a brief reference to which appeared in our last week's "News Miscellany:" From information received by the Government some time ago it was learnt that a band of desperadoes from the United States had entered upon British territory, where, well knowing that no force existed capable of punishing their misdeeds, they have been pursuing a lawless career of so aggravated a nature that it became absolutely necessary for the Canadian Government to assert its authority and mete out a full measure of justice and retribution. Outlaws to the number of about 500 have established themselves upon British soil at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, where they have built a fort and made ample provision for defence against either Government forces or the Indian tribes. They have established an illicit still, the product of which forms the principal commodity bartered with the natives for furs. The unfortunate red man, yielding to the temptations offered, purchases the fatal fire water, and in the frequent *melées* which result from the orgies that follow many an Indian has been murdered. Whatever article of utility the native hunter may exchange the trophies of the chase for, is almost certain very shortly afterwards to find its way back to the outlaws' fort in traffic for whisky. The ruffians carrying on this nefarious trade are for the most part living with Indian women obtained from the various tribes either by purchase or violence, and the crime, immorality, and sacrifice of life resulting from the existing state of affairs demand immediate and stern action by the Government. It might be supposed that at the advance of the expedition about to be sent by the Dominion to suppress these disorders the guilty parties would disperse and flee from justice; but it appears highly probable, from a full consideration of their situation and numerical strength, that they will defy the authorities, and offer a desperate resistance to the officers of the law. The outlaws are men accustomed to border warfare, and who have for years been used to encounter the dangers and hardships attending residence beyond the limits of civilisation and in the midst of hostile Indian tribes. Many of them are deserters from the United States army, while others are men who have had to flee from justice, and who dare not show themselves again on American territory, where Judge Lynch, if not the regular courts of law, is ready to deal with them for the commission of almost every crime in the calendar. These desperadoes, fighting as they will with halters round their necks, may accordingly be expected to offer an obstinate resistance to the Canadian authorities, and it is therefore well that every precaution should be taken to secure success to the projected expedition. The outlaws, it appears, are armed in great part with Spencer repeating rifles, capable of firing in succession, without reloading, 17 shots. This, however, is not all. A short time ago, by a well-planned raid across the border, they surprised a detachment of United States troops in an isolated fort, and appropriated six pieces of artillery. These have been placed in position in the fort before spoken of, so that it is not to be taken by assault without some difficulty. Some of the Yankee deserters are no doubt artillerymen, so that there is too good reason to fear that their means for defence will be employed to some advantage. The force now about to be sent against them, numbering 300 men all told, will be under the command of Colonel French, R.A., an Imperial officer 'lent' for a period of ten years to the Canadian Government, and who has until recently been acting as Commandant of A Battery at Kingston, where one of the Schools of Gunnery is established. The men under his command he has himself carefully selected from a vast number of applicants, and they have been chosen on account of healthy physique, good character, intelligence, and smartness. The inducements to join the force are generally as much love of adventure and a desire to see the Great Lone Land, as a wish for pecuniary gain. The pay for sub-constables is 75c. per day, the superior grades receiving higher remuneration. All members of the force who serve faithfully for the full term of three years are entitled to a free grant of 160 acres of land on receiving their discharge. Many men of education and position have entered the ranks, and one French gentleman who bears a title. We have also heard of a young Englishman, who, since he joined, has come into a property worth £30,000 sterling per annum; but he will not resign. Each man swears to perform his duties as a member of the police force of the North-West Territories, and to obey lawful orders. The North-West Mounted Police Force is limited by the Act of Parliament creating it to 300 men. The general organisation of the body is similar to that of a cavalry regiment, and it is divided into six troops, with an appropriate number of officers designated commissioners, inspectors, and sub-inspectors. The uniforms of officers and men are identical, with the exception that the former wear upon their wrists a twist of gold lace in the form of the Austrian knot. The clothing consists of scarlet tunic, on the Norfolk blouse principle, with gilt buttons bearing the impress of a regal crown; tight-fitting cloth breeches and boots, with ordinary hunting spurs, for mounted service; dark trousers, with double white stripe, for undress; cavalry forage cap with white band, and brown leather waist-belt and pouch. What we may term the non-commissioned officers sport chevrons in gold lace, according to their grade, upon the right arm. The force are armed with a Snider cavalry carbine and a single revolver, the latter to be worn in the belt. It is understood that the United States Government will send a military force along the southern side of the frontier to cooperate with the Dominion expedition, and between the two it is to be hoped the outlaws will be either shot, captured, or dispersed.

Shocking Spectacle in Siam.

The following extract from the "Voyage autour du Monde," by the Comte de Beauvoir, may prove interesting to some of our readers who are interested in the subject of cremation:

You know that in the Indies and here they do not bury but burn corpses. If it be true that our poor mortal remains are more cleanly destroyed thus than by worms and corruptions, if cremation resolves at one blow all questions concerning the unhealthiness of cemeteries, I must avow that there are few spectacles which are more horrible for the living, or which make an impression on the mind more likely to return in wakeful nights like a torturing night-mare. We stayed about twenty yards away, so as not to interefere with local superstitions, and this was what we saw: The corpse, wrapped in white linen, was taken from the coffin and laid in the Kiosque, upon a triple range of dry faggots. The 'Chaô-klein-balat,' or chief vicar of the talapoins, lighted the pile—the flames rose—its brightness, and the thick smoke at first hid everything from our eyes; by degrees the flame fell, the smoke disappeared, and the red embers alone remained; then the corpse appeared upon the top, and its flesh crackled horribly amid the religious silence of the spectators. But as death had only occurred the evening before, its nerves and muscles contracted under the action of the broiling fire, the arms twisted, the fingers moved the legs contracted and kicked away the embers. If it were not a known fact in physiology that a dead cat placed on a gridiron jumps like a living frog, we should have thought that the unfortunate being was awaking and returning to life. Indeed, this body of a man, rising and shaking his limbs in convulsive jerks, and seeming to writhe in agony on the burning fire iced the blood in my veins. Oh! no, I would not die here!

The Sealed Will.

"Do you suppose in case the money goes from me, that it will be given to you?"

"Dear child, how can I even guess? Your aunt, remember, is your father's sister, not mine; so it is scarcely likely she has even thought of me. I am afraid the heir in the sealed will is John Garland."

"Oh, mamma!"

"It is only guess-work."

"But he is so unfit to have the responsibility of money; a man known to be a gambler and a drinking man, if not an actual drunkard."

"Very true. Yet he is the nearest relative your Aunt Jessie had, excepting only yourself."

"I can scarcely think Aunt Jessie would leave him thirty thousand pounds."

"My dear, she has left it to you, her niece and namesake."

"But upon condition that I never marry. If I do, the sealed will in the hands of her lawyer is to be opened, and the money pass from me to the heir or heirs designated therein. You must know me well enough to be sure the money could never tempt me to break my engagement; yet, for your sake, I wish—Oh, why did Aunt Jessie leave it to me at all?"

"Do not think of me. I can live as we have done since your father died. But, Jessie," and Mrs. Markham's face looked grave and sad, "there is one view of the matter you do not take."

"I dare say there are fifty. Remember we have only had an hour or two to think, since the letter came from the lawyer. But what is the view you mean?"

"Charlie."

"Charlie!"

Jessie's large brown eyes were opened to their widest extent as she repeated the name, adding:

"Why, I haven't thought of anything but Charlie!"

"But—I mean—Dear me!" said the mother, shrinking from uttering her own thought, "You know, dear, you have always been considered your aunt's heiress; and Charlie is young, and only commencing the practice of his profession. It may be that he will——"

"Be false to me for the sake of money?" interrupted Jessie, with the rosiest of cheeks and brightest of eyes. "We will soon test that," and she drew a writing table to her side. "I will send him a copy of the lawyer's letter, and"—here her voice and eyes softened—"the assurance that Aunt Jessie's will makes no difference to me."

Mrs. Markham made no objection to this step; but after the letter was signed, sealed, and dispatched to the village by Polly, the only servant of the Markham household, she called Jessie again to her side.

Over the fair sweet face of the young girl there had crept a shade of gravity and perplexity since the arrival of the lawyer's letter, that clouded the brown eyes and gave the sensitive, mobile mouth a firmer pressure than was quite natural. Life had not been all sunshine for Jessie Markham, yet hers was one of the buoyant natures who find the silver lining for every cloud, and coax some sweetness from every bitter dose. Her father had been dead six years, and his business affairs having become complicated in some way not comprehensible to feminine intellects, his widow and child had found themselves reduced to an income that barely covered the necessaries of life. They left the city, and took a small cottage in the pretty village of Merton, where Mrs. Markham soon procured a class of music scholars, and herself gave Jessie lessons in the higher branches of English studies, German, French and music, till, at eighteen, her daughter also procured a few pupils in languages. They were very happy in their mutual affection, in the love of their pupils, and the cares of their little household.

It had been understood from the time Jessie was a tiny baby, that she would inherit the fortune of her maiden aunt, for whom she was named, and who came from the city every summer to spend a month or two in the little cottage, always bringing pretty presents to brighten the home of her brother's widow, and lavishing tenderest affection upon her niece.

Yet, though Jessie herself had known of her aunt's supposed intentions, neither she nor her mother had ever made calculations upon a fortune dependent upon the death of one for whom they felt the warmest affection, and the idea that others could be influenced by it was a new thought to the young girl.

She had given to her betrothed, Charlie Seaton, the first love of her young heart, believing his love was all her own. In the six years she had lived in Merton, child and maiden, Charlie Seaton had been her devoted admirer from the first. He was young, only twenty-three, and had recently finished his course of law study, and been admitted to the bar. His fortune, inherited from his father, was very small, barely covering his expenditure for board and clothing; but he was energetic, industrious, and, without brilliant talent, a clear-headed, intelligent student, promising to make a capable lawyer, if not a shining light at the bar.

Answering her mother's call, Jessie nestled down in her favourite seat at her feet, saying sadly:

"If Charlie was influenced by any hope of Aunt Jessie's money, mamma, it is better to know it now. I had supposed we would have to wait for our wedding-day until he had some practice, and you know I have a little sum of my own toward first expenses. We could live here, and—— There, I will not think of it any more till the answer comes to my letter."

"While you wait, dear," said her mother, "shall I tell you what I think is the explanation of your aunt's singular will? You, who knew her only as the gentle, sad woman of her later years, can scarcely realise, I presume, that she was once as bright, hopeful, and sunny-tempered as yourself. I think it is to save you from her own sorrow that she has taken from you the power of giving wealth to a mere fortune-hunter. She would have you wooed and won for yourself alone, and as she has never positively said you were to be her heiress, she has probably never supposed Charlie biassed by that hope. Still, dear, it is possible."

"Yes, it is possible," said Jessie, slowly; "but tell me about Aunt Jessie."

"Your grandfather Markham, Jessie, was one of the leading merchants of London when your aunt, his only daughter, was introduced to society. Your Uncle Hoyt was in good practice as a physician, your father doing then a fair business, and already married, and in his own home. It was therefore with the name of an heiress that Jessie danced through her first season, a careless, light-hearted girl, very pretty, and sufficiently accomplished to make a pleasing impression wherever she went. She was but little over twenty when she became engaged to Stanley Horton, the most fascinating man in all our circle of friends. Not only handsome and talented, and he was both, but possessing in a remarkable degree the courtly polish and winning grace of manners that go so far toward gaining a woman's heart. The absorbing love Jessie felt for him seemed mutual, and congratulations were the order of the day, when your grandfather failed. From a man of wealth he became actually poor, and losing energy and hope, he came with Jessie to share our home. Stanley Horton, the man we all supposed a devoted lover, was fully aware of the change in Jessie's prospects, yet he continued his visits, making no abrupt, ungentlemanly desertion of his betrothed. Yet we, who watched her with the jealousy of affection, soon discovered a change in her. She became pale and sad, often tearful, till finally she confided to me that Stanley was evidently weary of her, and had ceased to love her. Even then she attributed the change to some defect in herself, not seeing the mercenary motive till later, when time had taken the glamour of love from her eyes and heart. She gave him back his ring and promises; thus accepting the position his unmanly conduct forced upon her, of herself breaking the engagement between them. The first love of her life was the last. She was your grandfather's comfort until he died, and then went to keep house for Hoyt, who lost his wife and baby one year after his wedding-day. When he died, he left her the house and his money, and she lived there till she died. She wanted to adopt you when your father died, but I could not give you up. Still I know she loved you, and I am quite sure her will is not designed so much to keep you single, as it is to give you an opportunity to win the disinterested love of your future husband."

There was a long silence after Mrs. Markham concluded her story, and Jessie allowed her head to rest in her mother's lap, under her mother's caressing hand, trying to picture a future of easy competency shared by this companion of her life. It had its bright side; there was still love and happiness for her yet. And then a bright face crowned with curly brown hair would come before her, and she knew that neither the handsome house nor comfortable income could ever fill her heart if Charlie left a void there.

Suddenly, like a gust of wind, there swept into the little sitting-room a tall, broad-shouldered young man, in a grey tweed suit and slouch hat, which latter article found a resting-place upon the floor, as the young giant braced himself before Jessie in an attitude of grim defiance, that sent thrills of glad music into her heart.

"Will you have the kindness," Miss Markham," said the intruder, towering in his six feet of manhood over Jessie's low seat, "to tell me what you mean by the absurd letter Polly handed me? Was it not fully understood that you and I were to share this cottage with your mamma until I attained sufficient legal eminence to warrant the purchase of a house in London. Was I not deluded into the belief that your presence in the culinary department of our establishment was to reduce our expenses to the limits of our present income? Was it not represented to me that my present board bill was sufficient to meet the requirements of two in this domicile? In short, Miss Markham, in what way was I ever led to suppose that the fortune of your spinster aunt was to influence in the slightest degree your matrimonial intentions with regard to myself? I pause for a reply."

Jessie stood up, her hands meekly folded together, and her happy eyes downcast till the long lashes kissed her cheek.

"Please forgive me this time, and I'll never say it again," she said; and then the laugh dimpled her cheek, danced in her eyes, and rippled out clear and sweet upon the air.

"Oh, Charlie! Charlie! I knew you never thought of Aunt Jessie's money."

"And you," said Charlie, holding her off at arm's-length, "you can have it all, if you give me up."

"As if I loved money better than you!" said Jessie, nestling in the strong arms now wrapped closely around her.

It seemed, however, as if Charlie was actually afraid of the money that was so temptingly near Jessie's grasp, for he commenced a series of interviews that bore entirely upon the subject of an immediate marriage.

What was there to wait for, he would ask, and then enter upon calculations of his present expenses and those of the future, proving most conclusively that there was a decided saving for both in uniting their incomes.

"You remind me," said Jessie, "of the Dutchman who said he could almost support himself alone, and it was a pity if two of them could not do it entirely."

But though she laughed at him, Jessie was quite willing to admit the force of his reasoning; and one bright June morning, six months after Aunt Jessie's death, there was a wedding at the village church, and a breakfast in the cottage for a few chosen friends. Among these was Aunt Jessie's lawyer, for the will had stipulated that the sealed codicil was to be opened at Jessie's wedding if she preferred love to money.

The bride was a little paler than usual, when, with a solemn face, the lawyer broke the big, red seal. Visions of John Garland holding drunken revels in her aunt's house flitted across her mind, and then she looked into Charlie's face, and over her own crept an expression of perfect content.

The will was opened, and found to contain only a letter, directed to Jessie, and a short legally worded formula, making herself and her chosen husband joint inheritors of her aunt's fortune. Tearfully the bride opened the letter from the dead.

With loving words Aunt Jessie blessed her, and wished her happiness.

"I do not," she wrote, "approve of the money power in a family being entirely in the hands of a woman; therefore you will find, dear Jessie, that half my fortune only is yours, the remaining half to go to the husband who has proved he loved you for your own sweet self, not for your fortune."

During the wedding tour of the young couple Mrs. Markham, at their earnest solicitation, took an affectionate farewell of her pupils, and removed her household treasures to the London mansion; to which, in due time, came Charlie and Jessie, to brighten the long silent rooms with their happiness, and establish that loving circle that makes *home* of any house, however grand, or however poor.

The father of Grimaldi, the famous clown, who was living near Red Lion-square, was visited, during the famous Gordon riots, by an uproarious mob, who assumed that as a foreigner he belonged to the obnoxious Faith, his hall door not being chalked with the words, "No Popery!" The shout, "No Popery!" was raised, and they were preparing to sack the house, when Grimaldi suddenly threw up the second-floor window, and making comic grimaces, addressed them, "Genllemens, in dis hose dere be no religion *at all!*" This happy speech produced roars of laughter, and the mob passed on, giving him three cheers.

Pat's Philosophy.

When the winter is cold
  I keep meself warm;
When the summer is hot
  I keep meself cool:
It's mebbe I'm bold,
  And it's mebbe I'm not;
But a gossoon's a fool
  When he goes into harm!
Sez my old Uncle Dan—
  A wise one, and stiddy—
"What's the world to a man
  When his wife is a widdy?"

When the soldier struts by
  With his sword at his side,
And the rattle, rattle drums
  Beat the roll and the call,
He may go or may fly—
  I stay here till death comes,
For I mind me of all
  That in battle have died!
I am like Uncle Dan,
  For he said—troth and did he—
"What's the world to a man
  When his wife is a widdy?"

When the sailor hoists sail,
  And stands out on the deep,
Laving sweetheart or wife
  And the childer behind,
He timpts the wild gale,
  And he trifles with life,
And he sinks, d'ye mind,
  Where the mermaidens sleep!
"Pat," sez old uncle Dan,
  "Stay at home with your Biddy;
What's the world to a man
  When his wife is a widdy?"

Let the scholar sit up
  And write late and long,
To insure him a name—
  He may sit up for me;
Give me but a full cup,
  He may have all his fame;
For it's stuff, d'ye see,
  And not worth an old song!
Let us live, Uncle Dan;
  Let us live and love Biddy;
What's the world to a man
  When his wife is a widdy?

—*R. H. Stoddard.*

Shakespeare's Father.

Who were the parents of William Shakespeare? The Shakespeares, who had long been established in Warwickshire, were nobodies. Who John Shakespeare, the father of William, was, is not known; but it is probable that he was the son of a Richard Shakespeare, of Snitterfield, a town near Stratford. The first mention of the Shakespeares in Stratford dates back only twelve years before the birth of the poet. John Shakespeare was a tradesman of some sort—the biographers have not quite settled what. Aubrey says that he was a butcher, Rowe that he was a considerable dealer in wool; and Malone that he was a glover. If conjecture is worth anything—and we have to conjecture freely in order to piece out the Life of Shakspeare—I should say that he followed the trade of a glover until his affairs became embarrassed, when he declined to a lower one, such, I suppose, as that of a butcher was considered then. John Shakespeare was not a prosperous man; for though we find him at one time in offices of trust and dignity, we find him at a later time in very reduced circumstances. Some of these offices appear ludicrous to the modern mind, and others which have a grander sound were not so very grand after all. Among the former I should place the office of ale-taster, and among the latter the offices of burgess, chamberlain, and chief alderman. He must have been a man of probity, or he would hardly have been chosen for these offices, which extended over a period of twenty years; but he was not a man of education, for he could not write his name. He was not alone in this respect, for some of his fellow officials were marksmen also. No salary was attached to any of his offices, and the filling of them was either a piece of good nature on his part, which was commendable, or a desire to be well thought of, which was also commendable. Just before he was elected chief alderman of Stratford he made an attempt to obtain a grant of arms from the Herald's Office, which was not so commendable. He was not a gentleman, he was not a yeoman even, but some of his wife's ancestors were persons of consequence in the reign of Henry the Seventh—her grandfather, for example, being groom or page of the bed-chamber to that king; and these, by some curious slip of memory, were metamorphosed into his own ancestors! If Justice Shakespeare was as forgetful in other matters as he seems to have been in this, it is no wonder that he was unprosperous.

It was agreed in 1578 that every alderman of Stratford should pay towards the furniture of three pikemen, two bellmen, and one archer, the large sum of six shillings and eightpence, but he was required to pay only three shillings and fourpence. Towards the close of that year it was ordered that every alderman should pay fourpence a week for the relief of the poor, but he was excused from paying anything. His wife, Mary Arden, who was his superior in rank, had brought him, as her marriage portion, a small estate in land called Asbies, besides the sum of six pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence. Asbies was now mortgaged for forty pounds. He owed a baker five pounds, and two persons entered into securities for its payment. The next year there was a levy of money upon his townsmen for the purpose of armour and weapons, and he was among the defaulters. He was poor, he was growing old, and he had four or five children to feed, the eldest of whom had married Mistress Anne Hathaway, who had borne him three children in less than two years. Clearly, Goodman Shakespeare was to be pitied. And Mistress Shakespeare was to be pitied, too. For was not Asbies as good as gone? And William—what would become of that dear, idle, graceless varlet, William? Beshrew thee, man, and bestir thyself; it is in thee.

The late Archbishop Whately, who possessed, if not a very ready, at least a very keen wit, was accosted—so the story goes—at the table of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, by an aide-de-camp with the question: "What is the difference, your Grace, between an archbishop and a donkey?" His Grace owned that he did not know. "The archbishop has a cross on his breast, and the donkey on his back." "Yes, yes; oh! I see; very good. And," added his Grace, "what is the difference between an aide-de-camp and a donkey?" "I do not see any," was the unsuspecting reply. "Neither do I," was the reply, under which, we presume, the innocent aide succumbed.

Changing her Mind.

"One thing is quite certain," said Dorothy Dean. "*I* shall never marry a farmer."

She looked just like her sweet rustic name, as she stood there under the checkered green canopy of the great chestnut tree, where the robins were singing, and the sunshine turning all the leaves to flecks of floating gold. There was nothing of the imperial about our little heroine, but she was marvellously pretty to look upon, with blue, shining eyes, and the gold of the buttercup in her hair, while the faint, pink glow went and came upon her dimpled cheeks with the tide of every strong emotion that stirred her soul.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Morrell, who was knitting out on the front porch; "then it's just as well that Joseph Radcliffe, your old boy-and-girl sweetheart, is engaged to Barbara Wilde."

"Engaged! Is he?" Dorothy turned sharply around, her eyes unconsciously dilating. "And to Barbara Wilde! Dear me! what could there have been about her to captivate *him?*"

Mrs. Morrell smiled to herself as she seamed in the middle of her needle.

"Oh, well, I don't know. She is very stylish, you know, and she made a very agreeable impression when she came to visit her Uncle Amesford. And perhaps Mr. Radcliffe feels, as you do, that our home-spun, country-side people are scarcely fit mates for him."

Dorothy bit her lips.

"He is very particular," said she. "I should think any of the girls hereabout would be quite good enough for Joe Radcliffe."

"People used always to prophesy that you would become his wife some day," said Mrs. Morrell, artfully. "But since you have received a city boarding-school education, of course your actions are quite different."

"Of course," said Dorothy, absently, and then she went into the house to get her worsted work.

Yes, she and Joe Radcliffe had been little lovers years ago, when they dangled their baby legs from the same wooden bench in the school-house. He had gathered bags of the ripest nuts, and culled out the rosiest apples for her, and in strawberry times, had he not kept the nicest places for her, where the red fruit jewelled the grass-like drops of blood. What a nice little fellow he was! And now to think he was to be Barbara Wilde's husband!

"Of course, I'm not jealous," said Dorothy to herself, with a little disclaiming toss of the butter-cup gold curls. "He is only a farmer. Farmers aren't in my line at all. Cream and poultry and harvesting apples are prettier in romance than they are in real life; but for all that, I don't think he should have invited me to that picnic. I'll go, though—just to show Barbara Wilde that *I* can please Mr. Radcliffe as well as she."

Dorothy went. It was like all other pic-nics, but Dorothy Dean never forgot it. Barbara Wilde was there, in a white muslin dress, with rose-coloured ribbons; and she had the glowing satisfaction of engrossing Miss Wilde's lover all the afternoon.

"He's a great deal nicer than I thought," said Dorothy. "Don't you think he has improved during the past year, aunt?"

"Very much," said Mrs. Morrell. "He has bought the finest place in town now—the old Elmcourt property."

"Oh!" said Dorothy, opening wide her eyes. "He's not a common farmer at all, then?"

"A farmer!" said Mrs. Morrell, dryly, "but not a common one at all, in any respect. Barbara Wilde will gain a perfect treasure in him."

Dorothy looked down into the crown of her straw hat, dubiously. Elm-court was a fine old place, with century-old cedars fringing its terraces, and a stonehouse half-covered with ivy, and Joseph Radcliffe was dark and handsome, like Dorothy's dream of a Corsair lover. Two weeks passed away—three weeks! Dorothy wasn't half so happy as she had expected to be, when she came home, a "cut and-dried" young lady, with her education finished.

"It's all that horrid Barbara Wilde, with her city airs and imported graces," thought she. "What is she staying on at Squire Amesford's for? Why don't she go home, and get her wedding things ready?"

And Dorothy, to her surprise and vexation, found out that she was crying a little, as she walked across the daisy-pearled meadows toward the little trout-stream, whose brown gurgling waters made a merry monotone in the twilight.

"I am late," she thought, "and papa always scolds when I am not home in time for tea. I must take the short cut across the brook, even if the old bridge *is* a little unsafe."

And so Dorothy Dean left the by-path and plunged into the shady fastnesses of the woods that bordered the trout-stream with coolness and bird twitters.

Firmly she laid her light foot upon the shaking boards, her gloved hand on the mossy rail, and had crossed nearly half the little distance, when there was a cracking sound under her feet, a sudden giving way of the ruinous beams—and she fell.

Fortunately the water was not deep, but the bridge stood high enough to make the descent dangerous—and a low gasping cry isssued from her lips.

"Help! help!"

And she closed her eyes, expecting the next instant to feel the sharp and cruel edges of the rocks below.

But, to her infinite surprise, she felt herself grasped in a firm and tender hold, and glancing up found her own eyes mirrored in those of—Joseph Radcliffe.

"Dorothy, my darling! My little Dorothy! Thank God you are safe!"

"Joseph!" she gasped, "how came you here?"

"I was fishing close by the bridge. O, my love! my love! if I had not been here—it makes my blood run cold to think what would then have happened! Dorothy, if you had been killed, I would have shot myself! I didn't mean you to know it, but this terrible danger has frightened the truth out of me! Forget it, if you will, but it is, nevertheless, true! I love you, Dorothy!"

She looked at him with a vague, dreamy sense of happiness shining in her eyes.

"But—Barbara Wilde?"

"Barbara Wilde? Don't you know? She is engaged to my brother Cyril, and they are to be married in a month."

The blanched roses crimsoned once more into Dorothy's cheeks.

"O, Joseph, I thought it was *you.*"

They walked home together in the twilight, and after they had parted at the gate—parted with a true-lover's kiss—Dorothy ran back into the lamp-lighted sitting-room, where her father was reading the evening paper, and Aunt Morrell nodded over her everlasting knitting work.

"Aunt Morrell, what made you tell me that Joe Radcliff was engaged to Barbara Wilde?"

"Did I," said Mrs. Morrell. "Well, I thought so then, afterwards I heard that it was Cyril."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"Because I thought it would make no difference to you, my dear," said Mrs. Morrell. "You never will marry a farmer."

"Yes I shall," cried Dorothy. "I shall marry Mr. Radcliffe myself."

"Then you'll do a very sensible thing," said Aunt Morrell, no more excited than if Dorothy had told her she was going to buy a new muslin dress.

These old folks take things so much more coolly than their juniors.

The Banker and the Drover.

In order to obtain a wide circulation for their notes, and in districts whence they would not speedily return, the Scottish banks often purchased landed property in distant counties, and also advanced money to needy lairds on mortgages. Neither, scientifically considered, was a good bankable security, but they answered the purpose in the infancy and youth of Scottish banking. The owner or mortgagee owner of land at once had a standing and credit in the neighbourhood of the property so held, and the notes of the bank for wages, &c., were easily paid out, and kept out, in those days when railways were not, and even stage-coaches were of rare occurrence out of the line of the great roads between Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London.

Another mode of circulating notes was by getting the Highland drovers to use them in their journeys with cattle from the Highlands to England. Robin Carrick, as he was familiarly called, who managed the Ship Bank with great profit to himself and his partners for forty-six years, from 1775 till 1821—and whom I well recollect, when I was a boy, being pointed out to me as a very wealthy and very miserly man, in his shabby carriage, with its scare-crow driver and wretched horses—cultivated the acquaintance of the Highland drovers with considerable assiduity, for the purpose of passing his bank-notes through their agency. The following anecdote illustrates the keen dealing of both banker and drover, the former, with all his eagerness to circulate his notes in the remote regions of the Highlands, being equally determined not to abate one jot of his rights as a discounting banker. A drover came into Mr. Carrick's private room, and presenting a bill which wanted three days of maturity, asked the cash for it. Carrick readily agreed to discount the bill, and remarked that there was sixpence discount to be taken off.

"Na, na!" said the Highlandman, "she maun hae a' t'e siller."

"I can't do that," replied Carrick, "the discount must be deducted." He handed back the bill to its owner, put on his spectacles, resumed his pen, and commenced writing. The Highlander, getting outside the door, kept it a little ajar, and popping in his head, said—

"She'll gie't for a groat" (fourpence).

"No, no!" replied Carrick, "it must be sixpence."

"Weel, weel!" cried the drover, "if it maun be sae, it maun be sae." So the sixpence was deducted, and the balance handed to the drover in notes and change.—*William Wood.*

The Sweetest-Scented Flower.

Modern fashionable society, which decrees that none but betrothed brides shall wear the myrtle, is not aware, perhaps, that the custom dates back to the days of the Greeks and Romans.

> The lover with the myrtle sprays
> Adores his crisped tresses.
>
> —*Drayton.*

Old legends tell us that the Blessed Virgin, upon the occasion of her marriage to Joseph, wore a crown of myrtle. Still, it was not exclusively monopolised by brides, for among the Athenians it was customary to crown the dead with a garland of myrtle. It was also the symbol of authority, as such was worn by magistrates.

The swords of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were wreathed with sprays of myrtle when they went forth to deliver their countrymen from the tyranny of the Pisistratidæ, as we learn from an Athenian drinking song by Callistratus.

This plants receives its name from Myrsine, an Athenian maiden, the favourite of Minerva, and who was metamorphosed into this flower. It was sacred to Venus, one of whose numerous appellations was Myrtia.

> Sacred to Venus is the myrtle shade.

We are told by Ovid that upon one occasion, after Venus had been taking a bath in the river, while she was drying her wetted tresses, she was surprised by some satyrs, and from their rude gaze she hid herself under some myrtles which were growing there.

In commemoration of this, the Roman ladies held an annual feast, at which they performed their ablutions in myrtle groves, crowned themselves with the leaves, and offered sacrifices to Venus. In ancient times there stood a grove of myrtles in front of the temple of Venus on the Aventine.

> The Cyprian queen delights in myrtle groves.
>
> —*Virgil's Past.*

The same athor notices the preference which this plant has for the water side:

> Myrtle, that loves the shore;

and,

> Myrtle blooming on the sea-beat shore.

He places the myrtle second only to the laurel, for he says:

> And you, ye laurels, I will crop, and thee, O myrtle, next in dignity to the laurel; for thus arranged, you mingle sweet perfume.

In Hunt's "Foliage" the myrtle is also mentioned in company with the laurel. The word myrtle in Greek signifies perfume. It is held in high esteem among the Arabs. They have a tradition that Adam fell from Paradise with only three things—"the myrtle, which is the chief of sweet-scented flowers in the world; an ear of wheat, which is the chief of all kinds of food in the world; and pressed dates, which are the chief of the fruits of the world."

Perhaps this accounts for the special regard which the Jews have for the myrtle; for, whenever they can obtain it, they use it for their booths in the feast of Tabernacles. It is sold especially for this in the London markets.—*Mary A. Lloyd.*

Some years before the French Revolution, one of the *Fermiers Genereaux*, who had raised himself from a low condition to great opulence, being asked by a supercilious nobleman, "If his family was very ancient?" he replied, "My lord, there were three sons of Noah, who came with him out of the ark—I am descended from one of them, but have not been able exactly to ascertain which."

News Miscellany.

◆

Jack Ashore.—A party of seamen belonging to the crew of her Majesty's ship Vanguard involved themselves recently in serious trouble through giving way to their larkish propensities. They had been allowed to go on shore at Kingstown, where they "get into the sunshine," and became merry. When they were returning from Kingstown to their ship some of them attempted to carry away a handcart which was standing before a grocer's shop. The police pursued them, and a regular melée ensued, in the course of which an inspector was stabbed with a knife, and severely wounded. One of the seamen was arrested, and conveyed to the police-station, and the others were placed under arrest on board the Vanguard.

A Long Career of Brutality.—At the Warwick Assizes, Richard Mason, one of the roughs who have kept Birmingham in terror for a long period, was charged with stabbing James Britain with intent to do him grevious bodily harm. The prosecutor went into the White Hart public-house, Latimer-street, on the evening of Whit-Monday, where, without the least provocation, he was set upon by the prisoner and stabbed four times in the head. The jury found him guilty, and in passing sentence, the judge described his life as a long career of violence and brutality. There were not fewer than six previous convictions against him, the last one being at the assizes in 1872, when he got 18 months for wounding with intent to do grevious bodily harm. The learned judge said he should be wanting in duty if he did not stop his career, and then sentenced him to twenty years' penal servitude.

Politeness of a Paris Grocer.—The question of the adulteration of food is attracting attention in France as elsewhere. The demand on the part of the French public for legislative interference in the matter does not, however, appear to be very keen, and the leaders of opinion seem disposed to think that indifference and cowardice on the part of the cheated are chiefly to be blamed for the prevalence of fraud. A writer in the *Temps*, who maintains this thesis, tells a good story on the subject of short weight. A lover of dried prunes was in the habit every other day of buying a pound of these delicacies from a grocer in his neighbourhood. Although he asked and paid for the same quantity each time, he observed a progressive and notable diminution in the amount delivered to him, but being of a pacific disposition it was painful to him to accuse a man of cheating, on account of a little dried fruit. On the next occasion, however, seeing the grocer about to engulf a very meagre handful of prunes into a bag, he determined to give him a sharp lesson. Taking, therefore, the still empty bag out of the grocer's hands, he blew into it to fill it with air, put it into his pocket, threw his money upon the counter, and walked majestically out of the shop. So far, however, from appearing in the least disconcerted, the dealer darted after his customer, exclaiming, "Allow me, sir, at least, to tie up the parcel."

Tabby in the House of Commons.—Mr. Gathorne Hardy, when recently addressing the House of Commons on the Public Worship Bill, was startled by a burst of laughter from the crowded House, caused by the appearance of a large grey tabby cat, which, after descending the Opposition gangway, proceeded leisurely to cross the floor. Being frightened by the noise, the cat made a sudden spring from the floor over the shoulders of the members sitting on the front Ministerial bench below the gangway, and, amid shouts of laughter, bounded over the heads of members on the back benches until it reached a side door, when it vanished. This sudden apparition, the cat's still more sudden disappearance, and the astonishment of the members who found it vaulting so close to their faces and beards, almost convulsed the House.

Lieutenant Cameron's Expedition. — The *Manchester Guardian* publishes the following extract from a letter which has been received in that city from a brother of Lieutenant Cameron, of the Livingstone expedition: We have very good news from my brother. We have letters dated February 25 and 28, at Ujiji, on Lake Tanganyika, where he had arrived after a long and dangerous march. He had found Livingstone's map and papers, and intended to send them with some of his own men down to the coast at an early opportunity. He had already taken several observations, and appears to have determined the much-vexed question of the altitude of the lake, about 2500ft. above the sea. He had engaged a large canoe, with 14 oars, and intended to explore thoroughly this great inland sea. This has never yet been done, and will settle once for all as to whether this is the source of the Congo or the Nile. He seems, poor fellow, to have suffered from a bad leg, and to have been two or three times on the verge of recurrent fever; but he writes very cheerily about himself, and was full of pluck and energy. We have also heard, strangely enough, within the last few days, that Colonel Gordon, who has succeeded Sir S. Baker, has had tidings of my brother being in his canoe on the Lake Tanganyika. If Gordon presses southward and my brother northward the Nile problem may be solved.

Shooting at a Balloon.—Mr. Simmons, the balloonist, in a letter to the *Times*, had the following: I ascended with my balloon the Czar, taking with me Mr. G. F. Hawkins, of the Conservative Club, who will corroborate the statement I am about to make. We were much enjoying the beautiful scene presenting itself immediately beneath us, about midway between Southall and Harrow, exact time 8.55 p.m., when we distinctly heard the whizzing of three rifle shots in very close proximity to the car of the balloon, and the consequent report of the rifle or rifles. Permit me further to trouble you by announcing that I would give the sum of £100 to any one who can be the means of bringing to justice and conviction the miscreant, who attempted to commit an outrage which must be termed diabolical.

Assassination in New York.—American papers record a shocking murder committed on June 19th, in New York, and the attempted assassination of a police-officer by the murderer. Two men, named "Marx" Gill and Mortimer Sullivan were drinking together in a saloon in Murray-street, when they commenced a dispute about a yacht race, in the course of which Gill struck Sullivan on the face. The latter, however, took no notice of the insult beyond remarking that he did not want to strike a boy. Gill then left the saloon, but returned shortly afterwards and displayed a small revolver, which he took from his vest pocket. He then commenced playing dice with Sullivan, and on the latter calling him a coward because he would not go on playing, Gill suddenly drew out the pistol and shot him through the head, killing the unfortunate man at once. Gill at once made off, but he was followed by a large number of persons, who pointed him out to a mounted police-officer named Charles Seldon. The latter at once dismounted and went up to the murderer, who turned on him and presented the revolver at the officer's breast. One of the charges of the weapon had, however, previously gone accidentally through the ruffian's own hand, and he was therefore unable to cock the pistol, and Seldon, after a sharp struggle, succeeded in overpowering the man, who was eventually consigned to the Tombs, to await his trial. When first received in the prison Gill was very violent, and was only quieted by means of a strait-waistcoat. He is a well-known dangerous desperado, while his victim was generally regarded as a respectable and peaceable man.

The Matrimonial Market at Berlin.—Young people engaged (says the Berlin correspondent of the *Daily News*) are expected to pass three hundred and sixty-five evenings a year in each other's society. If they belong to the middle or poorer classes this phenomenon is generally witnessed at cheap beer-houses and gardens, varied in summer by an occasional rural excursion. If they have a more exalted position in the social scale there will generally be facilities for entertaining the victim at the home of the intended; and for beer gardens they will now and then substitute a concert or a play. But the full quota of evenings is always rigorously exacted. Perhaps the most delicate situation for an anxious suitor is when the mother is indifferent, or, with a little judicious matronly coquetry, knowing that he is anxious, pretends to be indifferent. This situation exacts from the candidate the most careful behaviour, especially late in the evening after beer, when the mother is likely to be sleepy and tired, and even irritable. One false step then may ruin all. The other evening a friend and I sat under a lime tree at a fashionable resort, amused at, and, in spite of ourselves, interested in, the proceedings at an adjacent table, where there was a family party, consisting of a father, three daughters, as many young men, and a mother calmly but unobtrusively directing the course of affairs. One of the young ladies, feeling cold, rose to throw a shawl over her shoulders, and of course all the young men by a common impulse plunged madly forward to assist her. One of those young men will never be seen again with that party. For he carried in his hand as he went to aid the young lady a heavy cane; and, with characteristic awkwardness, he managed, while drawing up the shawl, to thrust the end of the cane into the eye of the mother, and the shawl seeming to require a good deal of adjustment, as I have observed it often does when a young man is drawing it on, and the shoulders are those of a young lady, the unlucky wretch nearly ruined the maternal eye. At any rate he seems to have become convinced that it would never again look favourably on him, for he comes no more to the trysting place. My friend is a philosopher, and he had his moral ready. "After all," observed he, lighting a fresh cigarette, "yonder swain is no worse than the rest of us; it happens to many of us at critical moments to thrust a cane into the eye of the desired mother-in-law, and thus at one unlucky stroke to forfeit all our chances."

Louis Philippe's Love of Tomatos.—In the late King Louis Philippe the tomato lost an admirer whose feelings towards it amounted almost to adoration. When giving lessons as a school teacher during the emigration, he used to demonstrate the motion of the world by means of a tolerably spherical tomato; and a story is told of him at this period which puts his love for the vegetable in a very strong light. Being obliged to expel one of his pupils for continual truancy, the bad boy's mother called on the royal schoolmaster to beg him to overlook this fault and take him back. "Impossible!" repeated the prince, till he caught sight in a corner of the passage outside the schoolroom of an immense basket of tomatos, which the good woman was about to take to market. "What?" he cried, "tomatos here!" The mother begged his acceptance of the basketful, and the truant was allowed to remain. Twenty-seven years after a countryman came up to the King in the park at Neuilly, and was recognised by his illustrious teacher as the boy whose mother grew such fine tomatos; whereupon he drew a box from under his arm, and, presenting it to the King, said, "My mother, who is still alive, hopes that, although your circumstances are considerably altered, you may still be inclined to accept a few."

Terrific Hurricane.—A storm of unusual severity visited the north of Italy and the south and east of France a few days ago. A letter from Antibes, in the *Débats*, states that the thunder and lightning in that district were terrific, and that the hail was driven by the wind with such force that the leaves of the trees were riddled or torn to shreds, leaving nothing but naked branches. Figs, vines, olives, and other fruit-trees were ravaged, and some were torn up by the roots. People on the roads were felled and vehicles overturned. The hurricane did not keep a straight route, but was influenced by the currents formed in mountain gorges and in the valleys, and wheeled about, carrying ruin wherever it went. The sea, too, was unusually agitated, reflecting the terrible colour of the clouds, and maritime disasters will probably be heard of. At Tarbes the hail had to be removed in shovelfuls from the foot pavements, and round Montpelier the cornfields were almost destroyed.

Vineyard Depredators. — The vine-leaves used to decorate dessert dishes are no unimportant part of the fruiterer's stock-in-trade, and when gathered at leisure, and with due caution, their removal is rather beneficial than otherwise to the vines. The vine-growers in the neighbourhood of Paris have, however, suffered severely of late from the depredations of a band of miscreants who have been supplying the demand for these natural ornaments of the table by the most wasteful methods, tearing down plants and destroying fruit to carry off the verdant spoil. Three of these individuals were seen a few nights ago, at about two a.m., entering Paris laden with large sacks. On being stopped and questioned, one of them replied that the sacks contained vine-leaves gathered on his aunt's property, but being pressed to describe the situation of that domain, the thief became disconcerted, and he and his friends were arrested by the police, who found about twenty-nine kilogrammes of leaves in their sacks, to obtain which it is calculated that they had laid waste an acre of vineyard. Considering the low value of their booty, it was, perhaps, as the idle scholar said when he had learnt the alphabet, "hardly worth going through so much to gain so little."

Melancholy Death by Drowning of a Judge.—The *Utica* (New York) *Herald* states that the family of Judge Doolittle received from Dr. Kitchen a letter confirming the report of the judge's loss at sea, on the evening of the 21st of May. Dr. Kitchen writes that they had thus far had a pleasant trip, the judge enjoying himself, and meeting as pleasant companions, General Schenck, Dr. Dawson, and others. On the afternoon of the second day the sea was rough. They went to the state-room directly after tea. Becoming somewhat sea-sick, the judge proposed to walk a little on deck, and then return. He went directly up, Dr. Kitchen following in a few minutes. Arriving on deck and not seeing the judge, the doctor immediately went to the stern of the vessel. Two passengers sitting in the rear of the wheelhouse saw him in the water for an instant. The doctor adds that he must have gone directly to the side of the vessel, and, being sick and leaning over, lost his balance and fell.

The Body of a Lost Tourist Found.—Mr. John James, rector of Avington, Berks, has written as follows from Engadine: A poor Bergamasque shepherd, in quest of one or more stray sheep upon an unfrequented hill-side almost facing the village, came upon what proved to be the skull and skeleton of the Rev. Bertie Marriott, who from the 28th of last July had been missing, in spite of every pains taken on the day following and long afterwards to find traces of him, and in spite of £100 being offered for his discovery. His identity, as well as the accidental nature of his death, appears at once from visiting cards and letters and a Parisian gold watch being found in his pockets, from ten pounds' worth of money in French gold known to have been about him being found in his purse, and from his Bædiker guide book being found at two or three yards' distance from the spot. These and other particulars were ascertained, not by the poor shepherd, who went in dismay to report what he had seen to his chief upon the opposite mountain side, nor by the chief shepherd himself, but by the Mayor of the Commune, M. Enderlin; by the resident, Dr. Ludwig; by the coroner of the Engadine, and by the master of the Hôtel Roseg, at which the unfortunate gentleman was staying at the time of the fatal catastrophe. And here I must say that nothing could exceed the delicacy, as well as carefulness, of these gentlemen's proceedings in the matter. After telegraphing to his friends in Paris and London, and awaiting their replies, they left nothing for his fellow-countrymen to do but to see in its coffin the poor fleshless corpse, swathed in the garments in which the shepherd found it, and then to follow it to the parochial cemetery and witness its interment by the then acting English chaplain. This gentleman went the same afternoon with the writer to see the spot—very difficult to reach—where, at the foot of a tall pine and of a loftier precipice, the fox-gnawed remains had so long lain; and another friend accompanied the writer to the top of the precipice itself, over the shelving surface of which this daring Alpine climber seems to have fallen like an avalanche.

Illumination of the Bosphorus.—On the thirteen anniversary of his Majesty Abdul-Aziz's accession to the throne, Turkey was *en fête*, the Galata Bourse and banks closed, and all the men-of-war dressed ship. At noon the Sultan held a reception, which was well attended by the ambassadors, ministers, and high state officials. Amongst the former Count Zichy, the Austrian ambassador, was most conspicuous by his magnificent Hungarian costume, and attracted general attention. At night the Bosphorus was illuminated down the whole length from the Black Sea to Seraglio Point, but the fireworks, &c., were not as good as in former years. This was owing in some degree to the Viceroy's absence from Emirghian. Still his splendid yacht, the Mahroussa, was much admired by everyone. The minarets of Stamboul were very brilliant, and had a fine effect from a distance, where they looked like circles of fire floating amongst the clouds.

The First Steamer on the Assiniboine.—The *Manitoban* states that in May last Captain Samuel Painter, of the steamer Dakota, made a voyage to Portage la Pratrie, extending steam navigation to that point of the Assiniboine river—a distance of 150 miles. His immediate purpose was to bring from the Portage to Fort Garry a quantity of potatoes, which the authorities are distributing for seed through the agricultural societies of the province; but his whole cargo was 90 tons outward and 80 tons on the return trip. The first appearance of a steamer in the Assiniboine opposite Baie St. Paul, Poplar Point, High Bluff, and the Portage, produced a great sensation—people thronging the banks and greeting the Dakota with cheers and salutes. He had the advantage of the spring flood. The rapids in the first ten miles from Fort Garry constitute the chief difficulty.

A Feast of Roses.—Notwithstanding that the Royal Botanic Gardens (says the *Hour*) are not located in the "Vale of Cashmere, with its roses the brightest that earth ever gave," the Fellows of the Botanic Society succeeded in creating in them a tolerably faithful realisation of the "Feast of Roses," so rapturously sung of by Tom Moore. From sunset until midnight thousands of sparkling lamps, twinkling like stars among the trees and hanging in festoons along the sides of the winding pathways, threw a soft and mellow light around, while at frequent intervals fierce lime-lights cast their bright and powerful rays across the open spaces, and occasionally a coloured fire would throw a glare around. Gaslights, too, were brought into use, and illumined the tents and conservatories with the brilliancy of a ball-room. The night was warm and balmy, wherefore, as in the Cashmererian Vale, "did the maids and matrons leave their veils at home that brilliant eve," and array themselves in ordinarily evening costume. As the twilight slowly disappeared the stars came out one by one, the sky was blue and clear, and not a cloud was visible to cause anxiety to the wearer of the richest of silks or the most gossamer-like tarlatan. Everywhere in the gardens the lamps shone brightly o'er multitudes of fair women and brave men, who, throughout the evening, wandered at will through the glades and groves and shrubberies, with a freedom seldom permitted amid the artificial life of London, though common and natural enough in the country, and allowed as a matter of course on the Continent. Chaperones were lost and found and lost again, soft words were whispered in attentive ears, and who shall say that in some of the sheltered nooks tender vows were not recorded? Strains of music filled the air, merry laughter rang on all sides, sparkling eyes and bright faces were everywhere visible, and seemed to say:

"The moon had never shed a light
So clear as that which blessed them there;
The roses ne'er shone half so bright,
Nor they themselves looked half so fair."

Wooden Pavement in Fleet-street.—The Commissioners of Sewers have received a memorial, signed by nearly all the inhabitants of Fleet-street, in favour of substituting a wooden pavement for the present pavement of stone. This is a reform which for a long time has been much needed, and our only surprise is that not only in Fleet-street, but in other important thoroughfares of London, the clumsy contrivance of stone pavement is still permitted to exist. The doubts once entertained regarding the virtues of wood or asphalte pavement may now be said to have vanished. At first it was very natural that drivers should experience some difficulty in managing their horses on the smoother material. After been long accustomed to the firm and deep hold afforded by large paving-stones separated from one another by ravines of mud, the level of asphalte or wood seemed strange and perilous. Even supposing, however, that some inconvenience is caused to the horses by the use of the new material, it may, perhaps, be worth while to consider the comfort of human beings as being in itself important. There are a great number of persons who reserve all their tenderness for the brute creation, and who regard the distracting noises of stone pavement as only a trifling annoyance. But there is now a general desire for noiseless pavement, and local authorities will do well to give the matter a speedy consideration.

Thirty Killed and Forty Wounded.—The armed contest for the governorship of Arkansas being ended by the President's interposition, both sides have been estimating their losses in killed and wounded. From reports presented to General Churchill, of Baxter's army, it appears that during the entire trouble there were eight of his men killed and 13 wounded. On Brooks's side there were about 30 men killed and upwards of 40 wounded. Most of these were poor, misguided negroes who could not possibly have anything to win or lose in such a strife. In reply to a communication from the Governor, the Adjutant-General has submitted an estimate of expenses of the war amounting to 250,000 dols.; and the Commander of the Militia, in response to a similar communication, has submitted a statement of expenses amounting to 300,000 dols.

A New African Expedition.—We are in a position to announce (said the *Daily Telegraph*) that arrangements have been concluded between the proprietors of the *Daily Telegraph* and Mr. Bennett, proprietor of the *New York Herald*, under which an expedition will at once be despatched to Africa with the objects of investigating and reporting upon the haunts of the slave - traders; of pursuing to fulfilment the magnificent discoveries of the great explorer, Dr. Livingstone, and of completing, if possible, the remaining problems of Central African geography. This expedition has been undertaken by, and will be under the sole command of, Mr. Henry M. Stanley, whose successful journey "in search of Livingstone," upon the suggestion and at the charge of the proprietor of the *New York Herald*, was the means of succouring the illustrious traveller, and securing to science the fruit of his researches, while it enabled our distinguished countryman to prosecute his latest investigations. Mr. Stanley will in a short time leave England fully equipped with boats, arms, stores, and everything necessary for a thorough and protracted African expedition.

An English Female Secret Society.—An interesting account of a secret society established by and for the benefit of women is given by Mr. Lyulph Stanley, Assistant Commissioner (Friendly Societies Commission), in his report just issued. There are, he says, in Oldham several societies of women, but they are not, as a rule, in a flourishing condition. Thirty or forty years ago, when the affiliated orders were making great progress and gaining in popularity the idea spread, and secret societies of women were formed on the analogy of the Odd Fellows. Such a society is the Female Secret Insurance Society in the Oldham Saddleworth, Mossley, and Stalybridge districts. There are twenty lodges, and the list makes a fine show on paper; but their numbers have been dwindling for many years, and so have their funds. They can only show at the close of 1871, 330 members and £70. They have long ceased to give any sick pay, and are kept up for the sake of the funeral money. They meet monthly in their lodges, and 2d. a member must be spent in drink. They are apt to consume this in spirits, and the secretary of one of the lodges complains that he has witnessed very unseemly sights in consequence of this rule. At the quarterly meetings each delegate (a woman) receives sixpennyworth of liquor. The balance sheet of the society is curious. The expenditure is made of 19s. 3d. for liquor, 5d. for contribution cards, and 6s. for secretary's salary. No other benefits or disbursements. There are nineteen members, and the year's contributions amount to £3 18s. 6d.

Whistling in a Theatre.—A German correspondent writes: "The Hungarian Minister of the Interior has just decided that it is permissible to whistle in a theatre. The case was this: On the 13th January a tenor made his *debut* in the Pesth National Theatre, as "Manrico," in Verdi's *Trovatore* and failed. The Counts Eszterhazy and Bissingen and Herr von Baldacsy, who were in a *logé*, showed their dislike by loud whistling. Count Bissingen was summoned by the singer and fined 50 fls. for this expression of disapproval by the town magistrates. He appealed against this decision to the Minister of the Interior, who annulled this verdict and determined that every man could express his approval or disapproval as he liked."

Among the Fijians.—A correspondent of the *Echo* says: Kandavu, as approached from Australia, with the lofty peak of Mount Washington veiled in cloud, whilst brilliant sunshine is flooding the lower slopes, bringing out a hundred varying tints of green on land and lagoon, and flashing in the snowy foam of the encircling coral reef, is indeed charming to the eye, long wearied with the monotonous brownish green of the everlasting gum-tree. The *City of Adelaide* drops her anchor under the lee of Ngaloa Island on Sunday afternoon, and we are not long in going ashore. There is a Wesleyan Mission here, and the olive-skinned natives are now strict observers of the Sabbath. Some of us are in time to be present at afternoon service, conducted by a native missionary in a neat whitewashed building, the floor of which is carpeted with mats of rushes. On these from forty to fifty men, women, and children are squatting, listening to a sermon and kept in order by a tall native, who taps the heads of the inattentive with a thick cane. The service is brought to a close with a hymn, each line being read out by the missionary and then chanted to a somewhat monotonous, but not unpleasing, dirge-like air. The following day I visited the principal village in the bay. The huts are constructed of dried reeds firmly lashed to a strong framework of wooden poles, and average about twelve feet in height and twenty in length, by half that distance in breadth. They invariably have two doorways, about three feet by two, but neither windows nor chimney. Mats form the carpet as well as the beds; in the principal huts a low cane partition separates the family bedroom from the sitting-room. We enter several, shake hands with the inmates, seat ourselves, and attempt a conversation. This, however, is generally a failure, but the women evince the greatest interest in our watches, photographs, and clothes, and my eye-glass is a never-ceasing fund of amusement. At length we met with a young native, who calls himself Michael Ohake, and is proud of a smattering of English, and are entertained at lunch at the hut of one Cornelio Drano. The viands consist of fish, yams, and cocoa-nut, served on banana leaves, and washed down with the juice of the green cocoa-nut. The ladies of the household then proceed to make us cigars of the dried leaves of the wild tobacco, and we part with mutual gestures of friendship.

Bathing in the Seine.—The Parisian (says the *Pictorial World*) is especially on his own ground in the water of the Seine; he has a conviction, which he is far from hiding, that a true Parisian is the best swimmer in the world; and, being thus confident of his position, he is often vastly amusing. Of course all the world cannot give up half a day to the bath; the majority must rush into the water, pass their little moist half-hour, and go back to the baking stoves; but the real amateur absolutely devotes himself to the bath—he spends the whole day between *déjeuner* and dinner on the wet slippery boards, or in the doubtful water; he is solemn as a Turk, wraps himself up in his *burnous* and his dignity, and takes long smokes between his dips. When the hasty noisy visitors are few, and when there is a slight lull in the activity of the collegians, who tear about the place, mount the plunging-stages and drop down the suspended ropes like the monkeys in the great cage at the Jardin des Plantes, then the real Parisian mounts the rostrum, waits till all eyes are upon him, and then plunges into the water with as solemn an air as if he were performing an incantation. Yet each has his peculiarities, and an acute observer says that the social position of a man may easily be known by his bearing. If he drop his burnous, as it were, disdainfully at his feet, mount the steps gracefully, his head up and eye fixed on those around, he is a law student, an advocate, or a future political spouter. The soldier is always to be recognised by his abrupt movements and *insouciant* air; he plunges into the water as he would into fire, his head straight before him. The tradesman is more curious; he walks uneasily, "his embarrassed air makes one think of the first astonishment of Eden." His eyes are fixed on the water; when once in it he behaves like a dolphin in a river. But the supreme moment impresses him awkwardly; he hesitates more than once before making the plunge, and finally tumbles in like a sack of sand. The musician is an admirable plunger; he enters the water in valse time, well marked, and very gracefully. The poet and the chess-player have rather a vague air; they go into the water as if they were calculating the chances of resting beneath the frothy waves. As to the statesmen, or those who call themselves so, it is superfluous to say in what a deplorable manner they make the plunge.

Curious Chinese Custom.—As every Celestial wishes to be buried at his native place, on his death the body is placed in a large substantial coffin, and for some time he is kept in his own house, until the Fung-Shui—a deification of wind and water peculiar to the Chinese—has been consulted, or till the priests have determined, when and where the body is to be interred. Many may remember that Chang, the Chinese giant, brought his coffin with him to this country, and in this he was only following the custom of his race. In the vast emigration of Chinese to California, they cannot take coffins with them, but those who die in that far away land are all coffined and sent back to the "Middle Kingdom." This they believe to be an essential condition of bliss in the world to come. The Ningpo Cemetery at Shanghai is a large place where coffins are kept, much as we see goods at a railway terminus, or furniture at a pantechnicon. There is a similar place at Shanghai, to the north of the Bubbling Well-road known as the Canton Cemetery. There are priests attached to each of these places, who perform the necessary rites, and here defunct Celestials repose till they can be sent back to the region they came from, where they may sleep among their ancestors. All through life a Chinaman has his thoughts turned, as the most important object of his existence, to having a good coffin and a properly arranged grave where his bones will not be disturbed, and his children and his children's children, through all time, were that possible, will stand, and offer incense. You may burn down his house, or even kill him, but that is as nothing in his eyes to having his grave desecrated.

Annie Fay at the Crystal Palace.—Miss Annie Fay, the celebrated American medium, is as much in advance of Maskelyne and Cook as they were ahead of the Davenport Brothers. It is more than intimated at the commencement that there is something not of this earth about this young lady's powers, but that suggestion may be thrown to the winds. It is simply one of the best pieces of conjuring of its kind that has ever been seen in this country. Those who were to witness the *séance* were invited to inspect the small raised platform on six legs on which it took place. It was an ordinary flat deal structure, isolated from the floor by its legs, and with no communication with any part of the building round it. In the centre of this was a plain oak post with a small camp stool in front of it. On this Miss Fay took her seat, and two gentlemen who were utter strangers volunteered the task of binding her wrists firmly behind her back, and the ends of the ligatures were then sewn with black thread. Into the oak post the same gentlemen then screwed two stout ring bolts. To one of these Miss Fay's hands were fastened, to the other, higher up, a linen fastening was made tolerably tight round her neck. Her feet were then made fast together, and the end of the rope given to one of the audience to hold. When these preparations were complete a slight baize curtain, not larger than a tablecloth, was drawn before her, and in an instant she was heard playing on three instruments at once—the guitar, tambourine, and a kind of mouth-organ. To go through all she did would be but to publish a catalogue of most extraordinary tricks. She drank water, tied knots in a handkerchief, and did all but remove her hands and neck from the fastenings, which remained intact to the last, till, by some occult process, she cut them herself but showed the black cotton sewing still the same. She was, however, quite unable to undo her feet, which had been tied so tightly together as to hurt her. It is but fair, however, to say that she made little or no attempt to unfasten the knots, as she always kept her feet in sight of the audience, and the end of the rope by which they were secured was held by one of the gentlemen present. There were very many present who looked upon this performance as a manifest proof of Spiritualism. How it was done we cannot pretend to say, and only look on it as one of the best specimens of *séances* of this kind which we have ever seen.

"What have you got that's good?" said a hungry traveller, as he seated himself at a dinner table in Salt Lake City. "Oh, we've got roast beef, corn beef, roast mutton, boiled and fried ham, and broiled curlews!" "What is curlew?" said the stranger. "Curlew! why, curlew is a bird something like a snipe." "Could it fly?" "Yes." "Did it have wings?" "Yes." "Then I don't want any curlew. Anything that had wings and could fly, and didn't leave this blessed country, I don't want for dinner."

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CHAPTER V.

THE INQUEST.

For several days Marian kept her room, and pleaded a feverish cold to account for the shivering fits that seized her every time the anxious Letty came to her bed-side. Fortunately, there was nothing in her illness to alarm or surprise any one; her exertions at Mrs. Lacey's, her walk from thence in the heat of the day, and the shock of encountering the bearers of Peggy Grant's mortal remains, were considered sufficient to affect any sensitive organisation; even Percy Balfour, who called to enquire after her twice or thrice each day, was satisfied with Mrs. Darwin's assurances that Marian's indisposition was only a trifling one, and that she would soon recover.

Letty—tender, watchful nurse though she was—never detected the fears that haunted her patient continually. She did not dream that the fever glittering in her sister's eyes had its source in the mind instead of the body, nor could she have exercised it had she known the worst.

While Marian lay weak and ill, she learned from the gossiping Jane that an inquest had been held on the dead woman, and that public opinion was so divided as to the manner in which she came by her death, that the inquiry had been adjourned. Her informant Jane, with a good feeling that rose superior to her love of gossip, kept from the young lady the unpleasant fact that the landlord of the Wyvern had given evidence which caused suspicion to rest on Miss Moncton's reputed heir.

Joe Smith had sworn that soon after dusk, and within half an hour after Mrs. Grant quitted his door, a person, whom he believed to be Mr. Balfour, came from the direction she had taken. He also averred that this person was walking very quickly—almost running; and instead of "passing the time o' day" as he usually did, he hurried past the Wyvern, and Smith had seen him no more.

In consequence of this information, which was given with a reluctance to do the young gentleman any harm, that lent it additional weight, Percy received a notice to attend the adjourned inquiry. Some officious friend warned him of the rumours that were afloat in the town, but engrossed in Marian's illness, and conscious of his own innocence, he impatiently pooh-poohed the whole affair.

He would not even allow that the disappearance of the packet of papers rendered Mrs. Grant's death a suspicious one; but openly doubted whether at that hour of the day Smith could have been sober enough to render his statements reliable ones. So far was he from suspecting evil of any one, that the very slight annoyance the tale of his friend had aroused, was wholly forgotten when he called at Mr. Darwin's and learned that Marian was better and then walking in the garden.

An invincible reluctance to meet her brother-in-law had induced her to keep her chamber, as long as she could do so without rendering Letty suspicious or uneasy. Whilst lying there she repeatedly assured herself that under no circumstances would Godfrey Darwin—the man of unblemished character—the highly-respected solicitor—be guilty of a *crime.* But the first conviction, though so hastily formed, was not to be argued away. There are events in every life in which we do not wait to form a deliberate opinion, for they come upon us as facts which others may doubt, but which some internal evidence refuses to let us dispute. Rightly or wrongly a conviction of Godfrey Darwin's guilt clung to her, and the tress of hair that lay in her desk was ever before her eyes.

These feelings were followed by an eager craving to form her judgment from his looks and demeanour. If he were innocent how unpardonable to be thus condemning him! If he were guilty would he not have betrayed himself ere this to his servants or his wife? But as Marian was striving to take comfort from these thoughts, Letty's restless unhappiness rose before her, and she began to ask herself if it might not proceed from a long-felt, though carefully concealed, distrust of Godfrey's goodness.

She could have cried aloud in the anguish this thought inflicted. What picture could be more terrible than of a gentle, loving woman united to one whose outward seeming was so fair, and gradually discovering that it was but a whited sepulchre she had been worshipping? Was it this knowledge that drove Letty from one sect to another, as each form of religion failed to impart comfort and hope to the wife who prayed and bewailed not her own sins, but his, to whom she had bound herself for better for worse; whose secrets she must keep, and of whose evil doings she must be a helpless witness

Did she suspect anything of this last worst deed of all? Oh, no; it was impossible; for in her visits to her sister any casual mention of her husband was made in those tones of sorrowful tenderness to which her shuddering auditor had at last formed a clue. Brooding over these questions had the effect of peopling Marian's solitude with such images that at last it became intolerable; and in sheer desperation she declared herself well enough to go downstairs.

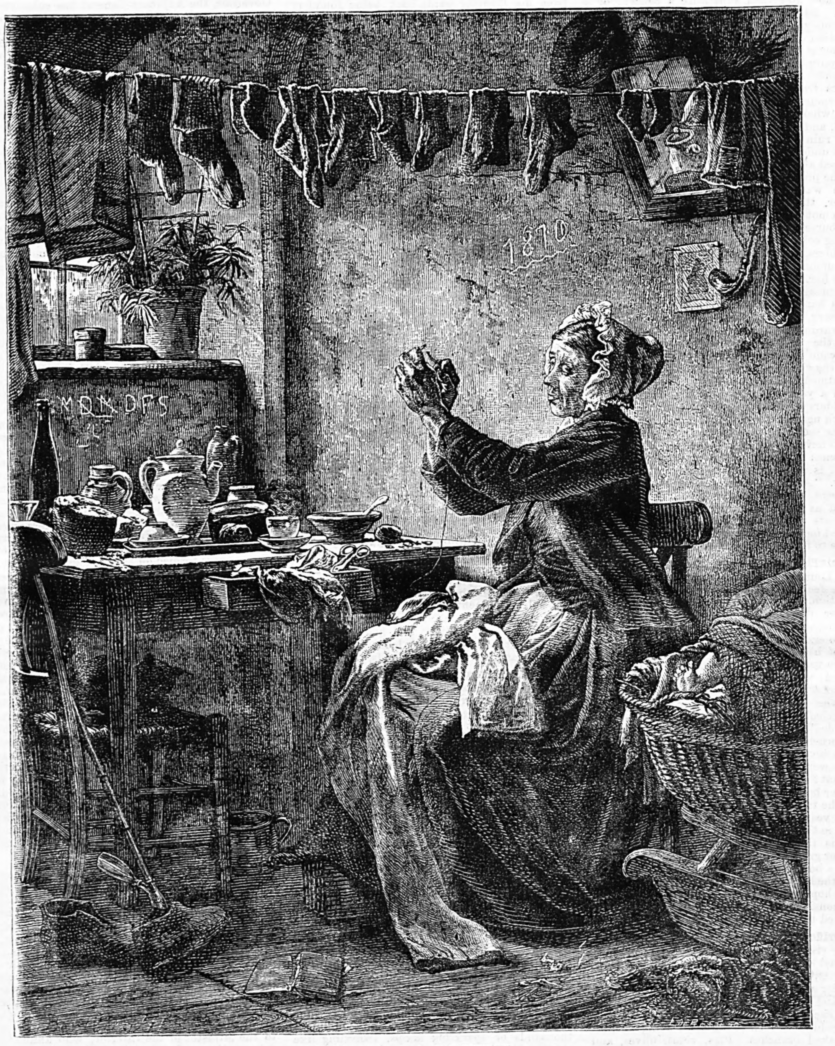
The first person she encountered was Mr. Darwin himself, composed and business-like as usual. He happened to be crossing the hall, and stopped to greet the pale girl, who involuntarily closed her eyes and averted her face. But he did not notice this. A quick "Ah, Marian, are you better? Glad to see you about again," and he stepped briskly into his office.

Was this quiet, equable voice the voice of a murderer? Was it possible to imagine those white, well-shaped hands, now smoothly folding the papers they held, engaged in a deadly grapple with a woman? Marian felt ashamed of the suspicions she had been nourishing, and impetuously sprang after him to expiate her fault by an ample confession. She felt that no smaller atonement would suffice, and that she could freely renounce every hope and wish of her life for the joy of seeing him start from her indignantly, with the flashing eye and passionate exclamations of an innocent man.

But when the excited girl pushed open the office door, she saw that Mr. John and a stranger were there. Still she ventured to falter a request for five minutes conversation; but Mr. Darwin curtly replied that he was busy, and waved her away.

Irritated at the disappointment, she went into the garden; and there, sitting listlessly under a drooping ash, she was fast falling back into her old doubts and fears, when Percy Balfour joined her.

It was very sweet to listen to his rapturous delight at her recovery, and answer the tender inquiries her changed looks evoked. Listening to him insensibly banished all sadder thoughts; lingering there with her hand clasped in his, and the south wind fanning a tinge of pink into her cheeks, and making her blood course more buoyantly, it was easy to think every one true, and be happy.



THE INDUSTRIOUS HOUSEWIFE.

"Has Mrs. Darwin forestalled me with my good news?" Percy asked presently. "No; I see that she has not. So much the better; I'd rather tell it myself. I have not been an idler while you were ill, for I fancied—was I right?—that you were rather anxious about our future. I'm afraid, Marian, dear, that there's nothing for me but to fight my way to fortune. If poor Peggy Grant did bring a will to England, which I very much doubt, it's not forthcoming, and she plainly told Smith at the Wyvern that she hadn't any good news for me."

"Percy," interposed his companion, her voice thrilling with the fears that surged up as soon as this subject was mentioned, "do you think—do you believe that—Mrs. Grant was murdered?" she essayed to add, but the words died on her lips.

"Think what, love? that Miss Moncton has bequeathed me anything? No, indeed; but you are well aware that I never built on her whimsical affection for me, and in the long run I may do better without a legacy than with one."

Marian made an effort to repeat her inquiry, but the young man did not catch the few faint syllables, and went on:

"Of course, love, I was thoroughly candid with Darwin, and told him the amount of the sum I can call my own, and what I purpose doing with it; and he behaved like a true friend. He offered—if Harris raises no objections—to take me into the firm as junior partner, and, of course, I closed with the offer at once, for this will remove all obstacles to our union, my dearest."

But Marian, instead of reciprocating his pleasure, leaned back wearily, and passed her handkerchief across her face. How could she rejoice at these tidings with all her doubts unresolved?

Percy drew her head down upon his shoulder, and talked hopefully about the partnership, or planned a blissful future, till something in Marian's troubled face checked him. Declaring that he was a selfish brute to forget how weak she must be, he started up and insisted on taking her indoors.

Mrs. Darwin, who had just returned from a weekday service at St. Antony's, asked him to stay to luncheon, for Percy Balfour was one of her few favourites; and her husband coming in at the same moment, seconded the request. Percy was nothing loath, and with his gay, good humour had even succeeded in drawing Letty into lively chat, until the subject of his plans came on the tapis; then, with sober face, she left the table and joined Marian, who was lying on a couch within hearing.

"You did not tell me of Godfrey's offer to Percy," the latter whispered.

"I had not heard of it till this moment," Mrs. Darwin replied constrainedly.

"Are you glad or sorry, Letty?" And raising herself on her elbow, Marian waited breathlessly for the answer to her query.

It came at last with visible reluctance.

"Not glad; oh, no; I cannot be glad." And Marian dared not ask her why.

As if fearing that she had said too much, Mrs. Darwin murmured something about London being much the best field for energetic young men, and then left the room; but Marian, dropping back on her pillows, lay furtively watching her brother-in-law till every hope of his innocence had died away.

It might be fancy that his eyes had grown strangely hollow, and that the lines upon his brow had deepened, but it was certain that his cheeks lost every vestige of colour when the name of the dead woman was mentioned by Percy: and when the young man dwelt upon her rugged but sterling virtues, and regretted that he had missed seeing her that night, Mr. Darwin set down the glass he had been raising to his lips and wiped the perspiration from his brow, with a look upon his ghastly visage that Marian never forgot.

He rose abruptly on the plea of having an appointment to keep, and Percy gladly pushed back his chair and turned to the silent Marian; but she was lying back, cold and insensible. While imaging the possibility of Godfrey's detection—the agony of his unhappy wife, his disgrace, and perhaps public execution—a numbing sickness had crept over her, and she remembered no more.

The family doctor pronounced the low fever that ensued as the result of over exertion, and prescribed rest and tonics; and as the easiest way of avoiding notice or provoking questions, she swallowed his prescriptions. For the rest she shut herself in her room again, and brooded over the secret crime that was poisoning every spring of her young life.

CHAPTER VI.

FOR HIS SAKE!

Mr. Harris, the pompous head of the firm of Harris and Darwin, displayed so much of his pomposity when the new partner was proposed to him, that Percy Balfour's fiery temper was aroused, and it needed all Mr. Darwin's tact to keep him from open hostilities.

"What does the fellow mean?" asked Percy, hotly, "with his *doubts* as to the wisdom of the proceeding, and attempts to make me comprehend that I ought to go down on my knees and thank him if he condescends to accept me? Why, what vast obligations shall I be under to him? He gives me the prestige of his name, I admit that, and I'd thank him for it if he did it decently; but I give him in return all the cash I possess and myself, with leave to take the monetary deficiency out of me, in hard work. If I come into your office as junior partner, I know very well that he will contrive that I shall have more than a third of the labours put on my shoulders. The man's a conceited ass, and I could find it in my heart to tell him so."

"And thereby forfeit his good will for ever," was Mr. Darwin's quiet reply.

Percy thrust his hands into his pockets. "I don't know whether I wouldn't prefer to be without it. You'll have a sorry time of it betwixt us. If he patronises me I shall choke; if he bullies me I shall quarrel with him."

"And, Marian, are you quite forgetting her?"

Percy winced. "If it hadn't been for the thought of my dear little girl, I should throw the concern over at once."

"Pshaw! Balfour," said Mr. Darwin, sharply. "If you are going to be so independent, I shall begin to wish that I had never made the proposal. Don't you see that your rejection of it would compromise me! I thought you had discrimination enough to see through Harris. He is a silly, pragmatical fellow, but with a little humouring, one may live on very good terms with him."

Percy raised his eye-brows and repeated the word "Humouring!" "I'm afraid that doesn't lay in my line at all."

"But," retorted the solicitor, "if you are going to show fight every time you come in contact with an unamiable or ignorant man, how are you going to live? Do you expect to be able to fight your way through the world literally as well as figuratively?"

These questions remained unanswered for several minutes, and Mr. Darwin, divining that a mental struggle was taking place, turned away and employed himself with some papers.

"Look here!" said Percy suddenly, "I know you think me hot-headed and not to be depended on, as well as too ready to take offence; and, perhaps, you are right. But I cannot help it. I'll not truckle to any man. If my berth here depends upon humouring Harris, don't take me, for I cannot do it. I'll honestly and faithfully fulfil my duty. You shall never have to complain of work neglected or badly done, but, even to call Marian my wife to-morrow, I cannot promise more."

Mr. Darwin smiled at the young man's earnestness; a mocking smile that made him redden, and feel as if he had said something particularly absurd.

"Pooh! this is 'much ado about nothing' with a vengeance! Harris rarely comes here now, and his complaints, if he makes any, are always levelled at me. Old John will tell you the same. He will scarcely recollect your existence a week after the agreement has been signed.

"And you think I am making myself of unnecessary consequence? Well, perhaps I am. I'll try and learn a little more humility before I take my seat at the desk."

With this laughing assurance the young man went away to attend the adjourned inquest, and account for his presence in farmer Brown's meadow on the evening of Peggy Grant's return to Meadsley; and this he did so fully and frankly that no one who heard him could doubt his truthfulness.

"He had been making a friendly call at Mr. Darwin's," he said, "and, learning that Miss Esmond had gone for a walk, he, with her brother-in-law's permission, followed her for the purpose of escorting her home; Mr. Darwin letting him out at a gate in the garden opening into the lane, and describing the direction she had taken. Knowing that a considerable time must have elapsed since Miss Esmond started, he had walked fast, very fast, but had no recollection of meeting any one until he reached the Wyvern. From here he returned into Meadsley by the road, this being the route he conjectured the young lady to have taken. He did not overtake her, but after inquiring at Mr. Darwin's, and hearing that she had safely reached home, he went to his own lodgings, which he left no more that night.

The inquiry was a protracted one, eventually terminating in an open verdict—that the deceased woman, Margaret Grant, was found drowned, but that there was no evidence to show how she came into the water.

But whilst those who succeeded in making their way into the small room in which the inquest was held, concurred in pronouncing Percy Balfour guiltless of any share in her death, those who were less fortunate retained their suspicions. During the inquiry a keen and incredulous juror contrived to throw a great deal of doubt upon Joe Smith's assertion respecting the papers he had seen in the possession of the deceased. Had his wife been called as a witness her corroborative evidence might have altered the case; but when Smith had been made to acknowledge that he had taken several glasses of ale in the course of the day with one and another, and that his sight wasn't of the clearest after a little liquor, people began to lose faith in his veracity.

But this only made the landlord of the Wyvern more vehement and positive when talking over the affair in the market-place and the Meadsley taverns, where he found plenty of auditors, gossip-loving folks, who did not scruple to aver that right had not been done; and that if Mr. Balfour, as next of kin, attempted to take possession of the Moncton property, they would insist on further search being made for the will which, if Peggy Grant's hints might be trusted, would have the effect of barring his succession altogether.

These reports came round to Percy in such an exaggerated form that he was extremely incensed. In the first transports of his wrath he was ready to do battle with every one who looked askance at him, but he soon cooled down. Too generous himself to retain any unfavourable impression long, he gauged others by his own standard, and assuring himself that the few whose good opinion he valued knew him too well to doubt his integrity, he received a friendly hint of the scandal with the scornful smile of utter indifference.

"I daresay I shall live it down," he said; "and who cares for the good or bad words of the worst half of mankind? Not I. They must have some one to abuse, and they are welcome to let it be me, so that they do not breathe their foul slanders in my hearing. I can't answer for what I should do if any one ventured upon that."

It was in this half-pacific, half-belligerent mood that he went to have an interview with Marian and settle the preliminaries of the partnership.

Mr. Harris had been telling all his acquaintances what was on the tapis, adding with profound gravity that it was undoubtedly a first-rate opening for any sensible young fellow. For his own part he should have preferred some one of higher standing; but as Darwin took an interest in young Balfour, he should waive his own objections and consent to accept him.

He hinted the same thing to Percy himself, when they met at the office, coupling it with a hope that Mr. Balfour would, by his zeal, &c., endeavour to repay the obligation he was about to add, but a flash from the eye of the candidate for these honours disconcerting him, he changed it into an incoherent something about business and attention.

"I have already expressed my intentions to Mr. Darwin," said Percy, stiffly, "and I prefer leaving the affair entirely to his management."

Without appearing to see Mr. Darwin's deprecating glance, he made his escape, and ran up to the drawing-room, where, as he had expected, he found Marian. She was fast recovering she said; but he was growing more observant of her looks and demeanour, and detected in both a greater change than a few feverish days should have occasioned. Seizing the opportunity their being left together gave him, he began to question her tenderly—lovingly. Had anything vexed or grieved her? Must he believe that she was disappointed after all at the loss of Miss Moncton's property?

He was startled at the altered tones of her voice when she began to answer him. They were hard and cold, and she firmly put aside the arm that had stolen around her.

"Listen to me, Percy. While I lay ill, with nothing to do but to think, I questioned my own heart a great deal. Of course, this proposed partnership and our marriage were uppermost in my thoughts—on one hinges the other; and I have been obliged to feel that they involve an amount of self-sacrifice on your part, which I ought not to permit."

Percy laughed outright. "A dreadful sacrifice it must be that insures me a darling little wife and a safe investment for my money."

"There are wider fields for your abilities than Meadsley affords," said Marian, gulping down a sigh.

"My love, it's a very humiliating confession to make, but I doubt whether I have any, or more than just enough to keep me out of mischief."

"Go to London, Percy," she urged, as if she had not heard his merry speech; "seek out the friends of your father, and let them use their interest in your behalf. You have energy, more than average intelligence, and you have perseverance. With these qualities what may you not achieve? A life frittered away in a solicitor's office is not the life to which you should be condemned. Quit Meadsley at once, and resolve to go steadily onward and upward till you have made yourself a name."

Percy's face flushed and his eye kindled, for he was not without ambition.

"I like the advice, but if I followed it remember that years might elapse before I could claim my Marian."

"That obstacle need not deter you," she answered. "I have resolved not to marry now—if ever!"

"A young lady's resolution, made to torment her lover," cried Percy, gaily. "Do you think any meed Fame could bestow would compensate for the loss of you? Let's have no more such jests as these, my dearest."

"I am in sober, sorrowful earnest," was the steady reply. "Don't fancy that it hasn't cost me anything to say this, but it is for your sake, Percy. I would give my life for you!—I would, indeed."

He clasped his arms about her, and she sobbed for some few moments convulsively.

"I don't understand this at all," he exclaimed, when she was more composed. "Perhaps we had better talk about something else."

"No, no; you must believe me—now, *now.* Nothing will alter my determination. My conscience tells me that I ought to release you, and I will do so at once, and for ever."

She drew from her finger the ring he had given her, and laid it in his hand, but Percy flung it on the table.

"I begin to see what you mean. Some kind friend has been telling you of Miss Moncton's objections to our marriage, and you are blaming yourself as the cause of her conduct to me. Isn't this it?"

"I have not decided hastily, nor without good reasons for what I say," Marian told him. "And now you must let me go, for I am not strong enough to bear more. Only make me one promise, Percy, before I leave you."

"Love, I'll make you a dozen if you'll only say that you'll think no more of this unkind resolve."

"Promise to tell Godfrey that you decline the partnership."

"Impossible! If I resign that, I resign you. Marian, you cannot know what you are asking. Dear love, you are weak and excited; to-morrow, when I see you again, you will think differently."

But Marian wrung her hands in vexation at his incredulity.

"You are wrong—you are quite wrong. Why will you not see that I mean what I say, and that you are only torturing me by this obstinate disbelief."

The vehemence with which she spoke carried conviction at last. Percy released her, and, drawing back, regarded her steadily. She could not endure his reproachful looks, but let her face droop on her bosom.

"Do you mean that you regret our engagement?" he asked sternly; "that you have seen some one whom you like better?"

"No, no," she faltered, but so faintly that he did not believe her.

"For some time past you have been cold and strange," he went on, "but I attributed this to your illness. Now it is plain that it is either as I said, or else you have heard the shameful reports current in Meadsley; and instead of clinging closer to me when I am unjustly suspected, you are among the first to fall away. Is this your boasted love?"

Marian did not reply, but Percy heard a low moan escape from her lips, and in an instant he was on his knee beside her, declaiming against himself for his hasty speech, and entreating her to forgive him.

"I have nothing to forgive. We shall always be friends, Percy."

He seated himself beside her, and she permitted the affectionate embrace, for never had he been so dear as now that she was renouncing the hope of being his. To send him from her was an act of heroism, almost requiring more fortitude than she could muster, yet how dare she continue the engagement, and permit him to bind himself to Godfrey Darwin, knowing what she knew?

As this question pressed itself upon her, she rose abruptly. "Say good-bye, Percy, and let us part. We are only prolonging a most miserable hour. I would not have pained either you or myself in this manner if I had not seen that it is absolutely necessary."

"And why?" he demanded. "Do you forget that only a few weeks since you promised to be mine, as soon as I could make a home for you?"

"I forget nothing," said Marian, with a shudder. "But there have been changes since then that make the past a folly."

"Indeed!" and Percy started up angrily. "I thank you for the hint. A fortnight ago I was the reputed heir to great wealth; now I am a poor man; it will be years before I can give my wife a carriage and a jewel-box, and therefore you call our engagement a folly. Marian, if anyone else had told me that you were mercenary I should have answered that they lied! and even now that your own lips condemn you, I feel as though I were in a dream. You cannot mean what you just said! It is impossible!"

But Marian only wrung her hands and turned from him. She longed to be taken to his breast again—to confide to him the dreadful trouble weighing her down; but a thought of Letty restrained her. Tender and grateful to her sister, Percy would undoubtedly show himself, but once convinced that there had been foul play, he would consider it a sacred duty to the dead to sift the affair to the bottom. No, she dared not divulge her horrible secret. She must keep silence, though her heart felt as though it must break in the struggle.

To Percy her silence seemed a confirmation of his suspicions, and yet he fought against them still.

"Speak, Marian," he exclaimed; "tell me that I have misjudged you," then waited breathlessly for her reply.

It could not be temper that kept her so mute, for who was more gentle and forgiving than Marian? He tried to draw her to him to look into her eyes and read the truth there, but she resisted. He made a last appeal. "One word—only one word, my dearest." But this remained unanswered, and the hot, angry blood surged to his brain. She was like too many of her sex—unworthy the devotion he had been lavishing upon her; and the next moment the closing of the door told her that he was gone.

Marian slid down on her knees, for her limbs trembled too much to sustain her weight, and in that position listened to his step as it slowly descended the stairs. She knew that in spite of his anger he left her with reluctance, and lingered on his way in the hope of hearing her recall him. Oh, that she dare do this!

Then she heard him pause at the foot of the staircase, as if half inclined to return unbidden, but his pride forbade it. He strode rapidly across the hall, and the heavy outer door closed behind him with a noise that sent a thrill through the listener above.

And now it was all over. They were parted. He would never attempt to see her again, and whatever shame might rest hereafter on those who were connected with Godfrey Darwin it could not include Percy Balfour. For this Marian had nerved herself to go through the painful interview; for this she had permitted him to believe her selfish and cold-hearted; but now that the words were spoken, and by her own act she had divided their lives, she was too wretched to be aught but a loving, despairing woman, full of rebellious thoughts and ready to hate the man who was the cause of all this misery.

"What have I done," she kept asking herself, "that I must bear the punishment of Godfrey Darwin's crime? Why did he commit it? And how can he, with such a deed on his conscience, talk and act just as usual, while I am overwhelmned with terror? What have I done to deserve this misery?"

Unconsciously she uttered the last few words aloud, and they were answered by Mrs. Darwin, who had just entered the room.

"What is the matter, Marian? I thought Percy was here. Foolish child, have you been quarreling with him?"

As Letty spoke she lightly passed her arm across her sister's shoulder and looked in her face. Its intense palour startled her.

"Why, Marian, dear! is it anything serious?"

Marian pushed away the caressing arm. It was another trial to be obliged to play the hypocrite with Letty, and just now she could not command herself to do it efficiently.

"Don't question me, please. Percy thinks I am mercenary, and—let me go away; I shall be better by myself."

But, instead of releasing her sister, Mrs. Darwin held her closer and spoke with unusual energy.

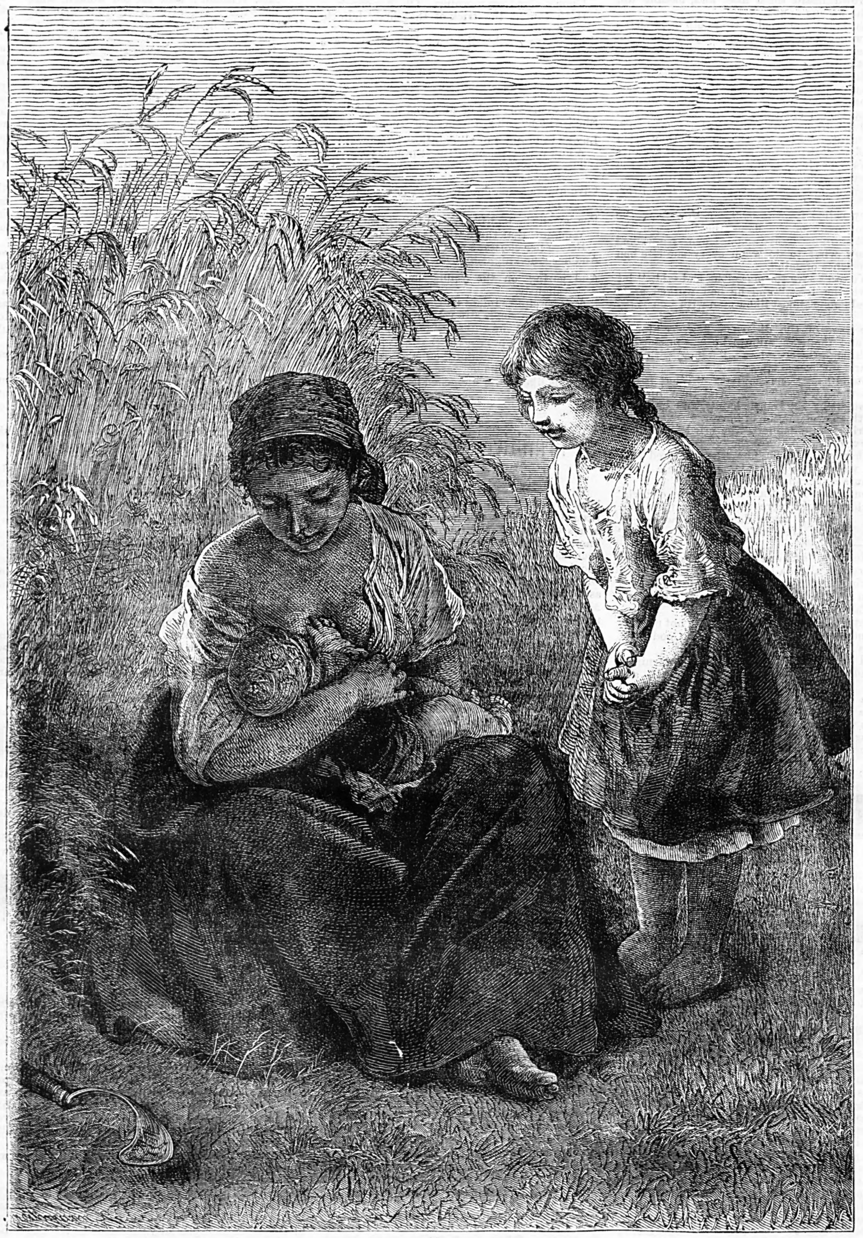
"Don't be self-willed and over hasty, Marian. If you have quarrelled with Percy be reconciled to him, for my sake as well as your own. It would grieve me dreadfully if you lost him through any girlish caprice. I should feel so easy about you, so happy, if I saw you united to a good man. You might make a better match, in a worldly sense," she added, as she saw no signs of yielding, "but, on the other hand, you might marry some one who would never be frank and straightforward like Percy Balfour—one who, however kind he might be, would inspire you with a constant dread that all was not as it should be; that he hid something from you—*something that would not bear the light*. She suddenly checked herself and tried to force a smile, "You see, dear, I am so anxious about you that I fancy what I pray God may never happen; but you'll make friends with Percy?"

Marian kissed her with all the compassionate affection she was beginning to feel for this poor troubled wife, and answered her pleadings evasively.

"I'll pledge myself not to do anything that would make you unhappy, Letty; but don't ask me any more just now. You must let Percy and I manage our own affairs."

Mrs. Darwin was not satisfied, but she knew not what else to urge, and Marian escaped to her own room, where she could freely indulge in her passionate grief and struggle for strength to subdue it.

(*To be continued.*)



IN THE HARVEST FIELD.

THE

Mystery of Ashleigh Grange.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Lily of Cloudesley Vale," &c.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER THE FUNERAL.

The approaches to Ashleigh Grange were crowded to do honour to the dead.

It mattered but little that the late owner had been the most unbending of men, the sternest of landlords.

By right of his position and wealth, dependants and friends paid their last tribute to his memory by attiring themselves in sable garments, and preparing to follow him to his grave.

Through the vast crowd Philip pushed his way in a dogged manner.

Scores of hats were raised as he passed. A hundred hands would have been held out to him on the smallest encouragement; but he pressed on amid murmurs of pitying remarks, taking no heed of any around.

Almost defiantly he strode up the broad steps and past the mutes who stared at him with astonishment.

"Where is Mr. Ashleigh?" he asked in a low tone of a man-servant who stood in the hall.

"In the library, Mr. Philip," the man replied. "Shall I take your hat, sir, and announce you?"

"No, thank you, John," answered Philip, in a kindly voice; for the man's respectful deference touched him somewhat: "I know the way."

It was some time since he had been under the old roof, and all the gall and wormwood of his heart rose as he glanced around.

Strange thoughts of the past time—of his brother, of Mina—these jumbled and jostled, as it were with recollections of that humble lodging in Lambeth where his pretty wife, Netty, had sighed and suffered so many weary months before the birth of her baby boy.

There was a curious choking in his throat—an angry, envious gnawing at his heart, as he entered his brother's presence unannounced and without warning.

Reginald was sitting at the centre table, with Mina by his side.

They appeared to be very silent—a hand clasped now and again, a furtive glance at the clock—these were the only signs (save for their raiment) which proclaimed that Philip Ashleigh, the elder, was to be laid in his grave this day.

At the quick, decisive step of Philip, both turned, and Reginald rose hastily, making a movement as if to meet him.

Mina caught his hand, as though she feared a quarrel even now; but he gently disengaged it, and held it out to Philip.

"I am glad to see you, brother," he commenced—and he spoke in a soft, low voice, "I wish I could say I saw you looking well."

The younger man flushed angrily.

"Never mind my looks, Regy," he said roughly, "I am not such a swell as you are, being the youngest born, you know, and have had to rough it, which I suppose you will never have to do. If he had been hunted and denied as I have been, Mina," he continued, turning to his cousin with a snear, "he would not look quite so prim as he does now."

Mina came over and held out her hand.

"Philip, dear Philip," let there be peace to-day," she said very solemnly. "In the presence of the dead there should be no taunts and gibes such as these."

He turned away and walked to the window, shading his eyes with his hand as he looked out.

Presently he came back and stood by his brother's side.

It happens once or twice in a lifetime that great contrasts breed exceeding bitterness, and it was this day exemplified by one of the most trifling circumstances in the world.

All around the walls choice and curious books, in bindings of oak and gold, were ranged. It was one of *the* libraries of the country, and the late squire had been inordinately proud of his collection of rare works.

In the panels between the cases were long and valuable Venetian mirrors, flashing like polished steel in the glare of the sun, and in one of these Philip looked and saw how 'ow he had fallen—comprehended fully, for the first time, the gulf that spread itself between his Bohemian life and the staid, respectable, unimpeachable career of his elder brother.

Was he really and truly the junior of this man who stood by his side?

This was the involuntary question that forced itself upon his attention—attracted his thoughts and held him prisoner.

Again he glanced, and then a feeling took possession of him which never left him afterwards.

It was the key of his strange, subsequent behaviour, perchance the monitor that might have warned him from the fatal rocks he was so rapidly approaching.

His lip trembled, his eyes grew hot and dim as he gazed.

This was the picture.

Philip, thin, shabbily dressed, hair and beard untrimmed, seeming a dozen years older than his brother, a flush upon his cheeks—an ominous appearance of the effect of strong drink was rapidly showing upon what had been very handsome features indeed.

And by his side stood Reginald, pale but very healthy-looking, daintily dressed, his white linen and black studs, the faultless tie of his cravat, the very movement of the well-shaped hands—all proclaiming the careful English gentleman on good terms with himself and all mankind.

And as if to complete the sketch, Mina, so pure and beautiful, stood in the background, with the worshipping glance of a loving woman fixed upon Reginald, the favoured lover, the heir of the great wealth of Squire Ashleigh, of Ashleigh Grange.

For a moment that old life in the narrow street in Lambeth—the garish tinsel of the theatre, the flaring lights of London and its gin palaces—all these passed quickly through Philip's mind.

For an instant only was he disloyal—cursing the folly that had taken him into such a world; then he remembered Netty and his little one, and a harder heart—a more unchastened spirit abode with him, and he turned abruptly away with an inward resolve to cut for ever the slight thread that bound him to past life at Ashleigh.

Mina broke the silence by a whisper to Reginald.

"Philip," said the elder brother; "if you would like to see father once again, there is yet time."

Philip shook his head.

"No, thank you, Reginald," he answered; "as in life, so in death. We cannot bridge over the stream now—it is too late. Do not let me disturb your arrangements," he continued, lightly; "I shall follow *him* to his grave; but I can walk with the humblest."

Reginald flushed angrily.

"You will occupy a seat in the carriage with me," he said, "next to the hearse."

Then he sent Mina away, and murmured to Philip in a low voice, never daring to look him in the face.

For a full minute he spoke; then Philip answered in such loud tones and with such a laugh, that it was even heard without, and the rumour spread around that the brothers were quarrelling fiercely.

Such, however, was not the case.

Reginald, who had a great horror of anything *outré*, or out of the common, had proposed, in his suave manner, that Philip should clothe himself in some of his attire.

"You know, Phil," he said, "you and I are about the same size, and in my dressing-room there are half-a-dozen suits just sent home; it will at the most be the work of a few minutes for you to change."

At this Philip burst out into a furious passion, and with a hoarse laugh swore he would follow his father as he was, or not at all.

He enlarged on Reginald's offer with sardonic glee—taunted him, and declared that the new owner of Ashleigh already began to show his power by insulting his disinherited brother.

It was a hard task for Reginald to keep his temper; but he did so, though his heart was sore and heavy; and no further kindness at present did he offer.

Philip asked for some brandy; and Reginald rang the bell.

"Show Mr. Philip the dining-room, John," he said coldly and haughtily, as the servant made his appearance. "I will call you when we are ready," he whispered to Philip.

The latter replied with a careless "All right," and swaggered from the room.

Philip had eaten with an hearty appetite, and had drank too, as was his wont, deeply.

It was a long time since he had tasted such generous wine; and the old butler himself, waiting upon him, primed him somewhat lavishly.

"Glad to see you, Mr. Philip; bless you, sir," he said; and the young man put out his hand, and shook that of the servitor in the genial fashion he had learned in his experience of an up-and-down life.

Nothing was good enough for him after this; and the old butler, who had seen service in the Ashleigh family nearly half a century, brought up a bottle of that choice green-seal Madeira, and then a second one, in order to take a glass with "Master Philip" as he still called him.

"There was no hypocrisy here," thought the ne'er-do-well younger son. This old man, at least, could gain nothing by serving him.

And so he drank and chatted, and even laughed complacently as he went over the incidents of his boyhood, till at length he was the light-hearted Philip Ashleigh once again, and not the poor shabby gentleman of Church-street, Lambeth.

He soon, however, began to yawn and feel rather sleepy over the goodly cheer; and, finally, had very dim ideas of why he was there, and what all the bustle was about.

His decorous brother, at this point, slipped into the room, and broke him from a light slumber.

"All is ready, Philip," he whispered. 'Come."

For a moment there was no response, and Reginald looked at him pityingly. But as he felt his brother's touch, the mist and cobwebs seemed to clear from his brain, and he rose rather unsteadily."

"Is the coffin down?" he muttered.

Reginald nodded gravely, and drew his hand through his arm, and thus they wended their way to the hall door, where all was in readiness.

Every head was uncovered as the brothers passed to the first mourning carriage; and farmers eagerly whispered to each other the glad news that the two brothers were reconciled and friendly after all.

The long *cortège* was presently in motion; and by and by the church was reached, the solemn service read amid reverent silence, and the old man laid in his grave.

Philip showed no emotion—his thoughts were far away

"Was that not old Gilkins, the lawyer?" he enquired of Reginald as they proceeded homewards.

"Yes," returned his brother; "he is to be present at the reading of the will; though, of course, Mr. Mount will act in everything. I know not why he is here to-day," continued Reginald, thoughtfully; but Mina tells me he has been much of late with her uncle."

There was nothing further said till the Grange was reached.

"Come into the library, Phil," said Reginald, gravely. "I must fetch Mina, too."

He blushed as he spoke, and Philip eyed him somewhat scornfully.

"Of course," he remarked, "she should be present, Regy, if it is only for the sake of lighting up the picture."

The canvas was very full of figures, notwithstanding Philip's jeering observation.

Every relative of the dead Philip Ashleigh no matter how distant—was here to-day; each and every one looking out hungrily for the crumbs that they expected to fall from the rich man's table—perchance hoping that some might come to them, no matter how far removed they were from the family name.

So the library was crowded indeed when Reginald brought in Mina.

She entered shrinkingly, hanging back, as it were at the last; but the sarcastic smile of Philip gave her courage, and, setting her teeth hard, she moved to a chair by his side, Reginald drawing another close to hers.

It was an anxious moment for most of the assembled guests.

The three who were actually interested in the dead man's will seemed to be the least concerned of the spectators.

Mr. Mount sat at the head of the table grave and solemn, coughing now and again in a highly important and significant manner.

A great hush and silence fell upon the eager watchful guests as the lawyer rose, and with pompous impressiveness broke the seals, and prepared to read the will.

It was curious to note the features of the expectant relatives.

It was a study only to be seen at such times as these—to be noted but once or twice in a long life. For these eager folk, related to the dead man by the most distant ties of blood, strained their ears, and awaited in trembling anxiety, pitiable to witness, the verdict of the lawyer.

(*Continued on page 8.*)

The Fire at Grantley Mills.

Janet Ayres stared at Phillis Denham in blank amaze.

“What!” she cried out. “*Tha* wants to tak’ th’ child—that child?”

“Ay,” said Phillis, with a sudden sharpening in her voice. “Wilt thou give me the child and keep the man?”

“Th’ mon!” cried the woman, with a fierce sneer. “I want neither th’ mon nor child. Tha may tak’ both.”

“Nay, but I will not take them both,” answered Phillis, a shrill tone breaking from her, quiet as she tried to seem; “I will not take them both. William Henders chose between me and thee, and he chose thee, and he may stick to thee. He is naught to me, but the child I want; and if thee has woman’s blood in thy body, thou canst not say me nay. Thee knows what thy own life has been; does thee want that little one’s to be like it? Thee has fed her with thy own strength—unless such as thee are different from other women; dost thou want to make her curse thee? Nay, but thou hast even a blacker soul than I fancied, if thou dost.”

Janet Ayres could not resist this strong appeal, and gave up the child to Phillis.

It was not many days before the women at the mills were gossiping among themselves concerning what little they knew of the story of Janet Ayres’s child. Phillis Denham had taken it to “fetch up,” as they put it, though how she had gained possession of it was a mystery. The two women came and went as usual, but there was no intercourse between them; each going her separate way when work was over, Janet to her desolate house, Phillis to her cottage and the child, who was cared for in her absence by a woman whom she had taken into her house for the purpose. Since the night Phillis carried the child away in her arms, Janet had persistently avoided her. Evidently she had not meant to do the thing by halves when she said she gave the child up for ever.

Who at Grantley has forgotten the fire at Grantley Mills? Who will ever forget it who lived in the generation in which it occurred? *The* fire! they call it to this day, though there were fires before and have been since. “It was th’ oil that did it,” the old mill-hands say. “Yo see, when th’ wenches oiled th’ looms th’ cans dripped, an’ there it were. Th’ floors soaked through an’ through enow to set th’ place afire,—an’ th’ first spark did fur it, an’ left no help. A’ th’ engines in Lanca’shire could na’ ha’ saved it. An’ so it went.”

As for Phillis Denham, to the last hour of dim old age—if such old age should come to her—the fearful day would be her most vivid memory. She had come down to her work in the morning in a heavy mood. She had been disturbed the night before strangely, and she had not been able to overcome her excitement. Sitting before the fire with the child in her arms, she had been startled by a sound at the window, and turning suddenly, she had caught sight of a vanishing face—a face that had plainly been looking in upon her and her firelit room. The sight made her heart leap and then almost stand still. She could not force herself to believe it fancy, and yet when she had opened the door there had been no one in sight up or down the moon-lit street. This was not all. So strangely nervous and excitable was she, that in passing the office she had been startled again by the mere sight of a tall man standing at the desk, with his back towards her, because his figure had seemed familiar.

“Did tha see th’ new overseer?” she heard a woman say, as she took her place; and her companion answered: “Aye, to be sure, an’ a good lookin’ chap he is, too.”

It was not more than two hours after, that a girl at the loom next Phillis’s looked up suddenly.

“What’s that?” she said, “Th’ bell ringin’?” And almost the next instant, with a paling face: “Th’ engines stoppin’,” she cried “sumat’s up, wenches.”

They were at the top story of the huge building, and so the alarm did not reach them until the stopping of the looms, but a minute later a puff of smoke and a sound of hurrying feet and women’s shrieks below told all the truth.

“It’s fire!” shrieked the girl. “It’s fire!” shrieked another and another, until voice upon voice took up the cry.

“Fire! Fire! Fire!” And every desperate creature in the great room rushed towards the narrow stairway, with no thought but the hope of being first.

But the stairway was crowded already, and the heat and smoke were rolling upward, and beating back those who were at the front, while the rest were fighting on behind. If the fire had been above they would have been safer; but it roared below and crackled, and poured out thick smoke from the oil-soaked flooring, and so choked and blinded the mass of struggling creatures that they were panic-stricken. They fought, and strove, and shrieked, and prayed, until some fell under foot, and were trampled down, and some hung wedged in the midst, neither able to move one way or the other.

Phillis had been carried with the crowd. The first instinct of self-preservation had made her follow the rest to the door, and then she had seen the mistake they all made, when it was too late. She had no control over herself; the shrieking women bore her with them until they reached the next room, when she was crushed against the open door, and through it, and flung against a woman who had shared her fate. In the terror of the moment Phillis scarcely saw the woman’s face, but the woman had seen her’s, and caught at her with a horrible cry. It was Janet Ayres. Phillis, all bruised and shuddering, stared at her as if she had been a spirit.

“Thee!—Janet Ayres!” she said, just as she had done when they met upon the staircase.

The woman covered her face with her hands.

“I came last neet,” she said, “an’ this mornin’ I come heer—fur *this*.”

There was no help for them—no place for them among the writhing mass upon the stairway.

“We must wait,” said Phillis. “It is certain death to try the stairway; it is on fire. They are mad with terror.”

“It is certain death ony wheer,” said Janet Ayres. “Th’ fire’ll be on us afore we can say a prayer.”

But Phillis caught her by the hand.

“Come to the window,” she said, “and let us cry to them in the yard. They must see or hear us.”

The floor was hot under their feet, the smoke was suffocating and blinding them, but they made their way to the window, and flung themselves against it, beating the glass until the blood streamed from their hands. But they were only two women, and on the stairways there were hundreds shrieking with voices as loud as theirs, and in the yard the engines were rattling to and fro, and firemen were shouting, and men and women screaming to their children, who were crushed or burning within.

“They cannot hear our voices,” cried Phillis; “and the smoke hides us.”

They waited for a while, and then tried again and even again, and then there came a fearful crash and such a burst of shrieks that women who were safe fainted, and men turned sick as death. The staircase had fallen, and with it its human burden.

Phillis sank down upon her knees, praying aloud. Her companion sprang at the window again like a wild animal, waving her arms frantically through the broken panes.

“We canna burn heer,” she shrieked. “They mun see us. Help, lads! Help, help!” And then to Phillis: “Shut th’ door an’ keep th’ smoke out, or we shall choke.” And when Phillis had obeyed her: “Come here, and help me t’ mak’ ’em hear.”

And the terror in their voices made them so wild and shrill that it was not many minutes before they were heard, even in the midst of the roar of flames and voices. Some woman in the crowd heard them first, and, looking up, saw the waving hands.

“Eh, lads,” she cried, “God help us!—thar’s some wenches on t’ third flight crying fur help, an’ their hands is all cut to pieces wi’ breakin’ thro’ the winder-glass.”

It drew the crowd to their side of the building in a minute’s time—rushing round with new cries and wilder frenzy—shouting to the desperate imprisoned creatures at the window—yelling to the firemen and growing almost mad with excitement. “Play on the room,” they cried insanely. “Bring the ladders! That’s Janet Ayres’s voice! Aye, an’ by God! that’s the Quaker wench’s! Lasses, it’s Phillis Denham an’ Jenny Ayres. Whar’s the new overseer?”

They called for the overseer, for from the first outbreak of the flames he had been the coolest and most active among them. He seemed to know what to do when every one else had lost presence of mind.

“We can’t save the place,” he had said, “let us save the lives,” and he had worked amid fire and smoke almost like a man with a charmed life.

The news of the discovery flew to him at once, and the next minute he was forcing his way through the crowd—a tall fellow, with blue eyes and uncovered tawny hair.

“Stand back!” he shouted. “What is this about these women?——” And then his eye was caught by the frantic hands, and he broke off with an exclamation of horror.

“Bring those ladders,” he cried—and then, to the crowd, “Who are they?”

“There’s two o’ ’em,” he was answered by a dozen voices, “a Quaker lass and Jennie Ayres—Jennie Ayres and Phillis Denham.”

“Dunnot see as theer’s much use o’ tryin’ th’ ladders,” said more than one man, doubtfully. “It’s a main dangersome work. It canna be long afore th’ walls crack in, an’ then——”

“Henders,” said one of the owners, who had just arrived, all in a hurry, “God knows it’s a sickening, horrible thing, but—but it’s a hard fate to face, and it’s a bad look out. The walls may fall in, and——”

“Let them fall,” he cried. “It’s not my way to stand by and see women die. Good God, Phillis! to think it should be you.”

And in spite of protestations and warnings, he had the ladders against the wall, and when they were ready he was ready too, a heavy hammer in his hand to break in the frames of the fastened windows. God knows what tumult rose in their breasts, when, looking down upon their deliverer, they beheld this man’s face. Janet Ayres fell back with a groan, turning to the woman whose life she had blighted:

“Dost tha see?” she said.

Phillis answered with white lips.

“Aye! I see,” she said, “I see,” and hid her face.

There was a moment’s pause, in which she heard the woman at her side panting as if for breath, and then Janet Ayres touched her sleeve, and when she looked at her she saw such deadly anguish in her face as made her start aside.

“See,” said the unhappy creature, “see thee heer. Theer is na a moment—he will be heer—he canna tak’ two—th’ ladder will not bear it—and the one as stays behind——” She broke off with a shudder. But she began again, “I mun be th’ one as stays behind,” she said. “He mun tak’ thee.”

“Nay,” cried Phillis, a passionate pity and a passionate heroism rising within her. “Never that. God forgive me for the hard words I have spoken to thee; I will stay.”

The woman, crouching on her knees, wrung her hands together. Was she tempted by an agonising thought of her own sin, and the purity of this unstained creature whose soul was so much safer than her own.

“Theer is na a minnet,” she said, “he is here now,” and so he was—beating in the window frame.

“It is thee, he mun tak’—fur th’ child’s sake—I’ve gi’en her up. Happen it’ll gi’ me a chance—I dunnot know—but I want a chance—fur the child’s sake. I’ve axed fur one in my way—an’ happen this is it. He mun’ tak’ thee.”

And then the man was in the room, black with smoke, scorched with fire, almost blinded, and staggering, but it was Phillis his blinded eyes saw—not her rival.

“Phillis,” he cried, “Phillis—come with me. You can forgive me for a minute’s time. I have come to save you.”

But Phillis drew back.

“I forgive you,” she said. “God forgive me that I have been so hard; but there is another—Janet Ayres.”

Not a second’s pause, but Janet Ayres rose up and confronted him with misery in her eyes.

“Tak’ tha woman tha loves best,” she said.

“Phillis,” he cried, “for God’s sake.”

“I will not go,” she cried, and slipped fainting upon the floor.

That moment Janet Ayres advanced towards her.

“Tha will go,” she said. “Theer is na a moment, an’ I will na gi’ my life fur nowt. Tak’ her in thy arms, Will Henders.”

He had her in his arms already. He had her through the window upon the ladder, and the people were shrieking below.

Janet Ayres stood at the window looking down.

“I will come back,” he shouted.

But she did not seem to hear him. She was saying over something—saying it with blanching lips and dilated eyes—saying it to herself in a whisper:

“Fur th’ child’s sake—for th’ child’s sake.”

He had thought he might return, but the watching crowd knew he would not. Fire and smoke pouring out at the windows fought against him on his dangerous downward way. Twice he nearly slipped. More than once his burden was almost too much for him, and the frail support he clung to tottered beneath his tread, and when he touched the ground the fire had reached the third floor room, and the ladder fell with a crash.

“Let me go back,” he shrieked, when they tried to hold him, and he was man enough to mean what he said. But they held him fast, and one, more thoughtful than the rest, forced him away with his back to the building.

The woman at the window stood still. The people below watched her breathlessly, or hid their faces in horror. The room grew hotter and hotter; there were rising tongues of flame here and there. The heat scorched her flesh, and she had to press close against the window for a breath! Oh, God! how safe they were below! Then there was a crash; the flooring shook.

“Fur th’ child’s sake,” she cried, “Jenny! Happen this is the chance, Christ!——” and so went down into the abyss with her arms flung wildly upwards.

Fair and Fifteen.

She is the east just ready for the sun
  Upon a cloudless morning. Oh, her cheek
  Hath caught the trick of that first, delicate streak
Which says earth’s light-ward footsteps have begun!

And still her brow is like some Arctic height
  Which never knows the full, hot flush of noon;
  She wears the seal of May and not of June;
She is the new day, furthest off from night!

Luring in promise of all daintiest sweetness:
  A bud with crimson rifting through its green;
  The large, clear eyes, so shy their lids between,
Give hints of this dear wonder’s near completeness.

For, when the bud is fair and full, like this,
  We know that there will be a queen of roses,
  Before her cloister’s emerald gate uncloses,
And her true knight unlocks her with a kiss!

And gazing on the young moon, fashioned slightly,
  A silver cipher inlaid on the blue,
  For all that she is strange and slim and new,
We know that she will grow in glory nightly.

And dear to loving eyes as that first look
  The watcher getteth of the far, white sail,
  This new light on her face; she doth prevail
Upon us like a rare, unopened book!

—*Howard Glyndon.*

A Primitive Schoolmaster.

The school was a small room in a sort of hut, kept by a half-witted creature called Singy Brod—“Singy,” a nickname suggested by the man’s sing-song intonation of speech. Nobody knew whence Singgy had come; but he had been so long settled in the district that the people accepted him as a permanent institution. Droll, too, that nobody remembered Singy as anything but what he was when George Methven became his pupil—a little wiry old man, with lank iron-grey hair, and dressed in a long frock-coat, brown with age and diversified with patches. His hut contained a single room; and he took charge of all the children who had to be left unprotected by their natural guardians during working-hours. Singy’s was, in a manner, a feeder to the parish school—at which he was never wearied scoffing. He did manage to instil into his pupils a dim idea that the alphabet by certain magical combinations formed words, and a few of the children acquired the art of making bad pot-hooks. But in winter Singy was chiefly occupied trying to keep up a fire with very little peat and no coal—down on his knees, alternately puffing at the feeble flame and scolding the urchins; and in summer he generally began his day’s work with the announcement—

“We’ll have no school to-day, bairns; we’ll awa to the burn and fush for minnows.”

The infants, delighted to get out to the sunshine, raised a joyful shout, and followed their master. In the course of these excursions he would sometimes obtain a pennyworth of candy from the perambulating rag and bone merchant; with this confection—made of treacle and flour—he would treat all the good boys and girls, and the bad ones equally; for, although Singy threatened much, he seldom carried his punishment beyond the threat. He fared well enough himself, for usually he stepped into the nearest farm-house at dinner hour, and nobody ever thought of denying him a share of whatever might be on the table. Sometimes he would fix upon the house where he intended to dine, and he would call in the morning to intimate his intention, also to direct the goodwife to “be sure to put ingans in the broth.”

All this freedom was rarely resented. Singy was pitied and laughed at with an under-current of liking; for he always carried in his hand a torn dirty copy of “Horace” (which he was never known to read); and Latin and the Church being so closely allied in the agricultural mind, the book served as a talisman which secured for the owner food and endurances.—*C. Gibbon.*

Sister Selina.

It was not our own sister—Jessie’s and mine—for our father had married twice, and Selina was the only child of his first wife, and was thirteen years old when he married our mother, who also died when I was two years old, and Jessie a month-old baby. Selina was seventeen by that time, and when our mother sorrowed, as only mothers can, at leaving her two baby girls, the little step-child promised to be a mother to us while she lived.

Nobly she kept her promise; motherless as we were, we never missed mother love or care. Even in the brief, happy time when our Selina was a promised wife, she stipulated for keeping a supervision over Jessie and me; and later, when her heart-sorrow came, she never failed or faltered in her self-imposed duty to us. While she was yet young, our father also died, leaving our share of his property under the control of our step-sister until we should marry or come of age.

We lived a happy, quiet life at Rose Cottage, a very pretty house on the outskirts of Marsden, overshadowed a little by the grandeur of the great house of the town, where the housekeeper was queen in the absence of the owner, who had gone on a wedding to the continent when we were children, and remained for ten years.

Charles Willmot was a hero in the eyes of the Marsden girls, owning, as he did, the handsomest house, most extensive grounds, and largest income for many a mile around. We noticed—Jessie and I—that Selina was always very silent when Charles Willmot was under discussion, but we were great girls of eighteen and sixteen, and Selina was an acknowledged old maid before we knew the reason.

It was in September, one of those warm, gorgeous days when winter seems too far away to realize, that Granny Cox, the universal washerwoman for those who hired “day’s washings,” came to Rose Cottage full of news.

“Well,” said she, rubbing over the board, while Jessie starched fine things, and I made pies, Selina and our only girl being engaged in the upstairs work, “well,” said Granny Cox, “I’m free to confess that I don’t see no such white clothes in Marsden as you have here, and a power of them, too, for old hands to wash.”

“That is one economy Selina won’t practise,” said Jessie, “saving in washing.”

“She’s the dainty lady she always was,” said Granny, “and wears white clothes fit for a queen. Mrs. Willmot herself han’t no finer ruffling than this!”

And Granny held up a skirt, looking to see how we took this first shot. We took it with a breathless cry of——

“Mrs. Willmot!” in chorus.

“Mrs. Willmot!” said the old woman, shaking out the skirt, after a vigorous wringing. “She’s come home at last. She sent for me last night to take a washing as big as ever I put through the suds, ’cause she’s been travelling.”

“But, Granny, has she come home to stay?” we asked, full of excitement, for the occupancy of the great house by the great family is an event of vast importance in a little village like Marsden.

“Like as not she will. I ’spose they’ll think folks has forgot the old story, though I’ll always stick to it that Charles Willmot stayed ten years out of Marsden ’cause he and his fine lady wife were ashamed to show their faces there. Beg pardon, Miss Selina—I didn’t hear you come in.”

“What were you saying?” Selina asked, in her even, low voice, with yet a sound in it that made me look up.

“I was telling the young ladies that Mr. Charles Willmot and his wife came home last night from foreign parts,” said the old woman, in a strangely humble tone, and recommenced her rubbing, muttering so that only I heard her.

“My tongue is always wagging in the wrong place.”

I glanced again at Selina. Surely I was not mistaken in thinking her sweet face paler than I had ever remembered seeing it, and the little white hands resting on the table were trembling like a leaf. She did not speak for a moment, but when she did it was to give me some trifling direction about my culinary labours, and then leave us again.

“God bless her sweet face,” said Granny, looking after her; “I wouldn’t make her look like that for a kingdom. I never heard her coming.”

“But, Granny,” Jessie asked, “what ailed her?”

“Somebody’ll be sure to tell you, now he’s got back,” said Granny; “and being as he’s a big man here, they’ll tell his side, like as not; so I’ll tell you the rights of it. You look out, Miss Jessie; Miss Selina don’t catch me again. You never heard, maybe, that she and Charles Willmot was engaged ten years ago?”

“Never,” said Jessie.

“Well, I want to know. Own folks always is the last to hear the news. He courted her before your father died. She was as pretty as a pink.”

“She’s as pretty as a pink now,” I said; “there is not a girl in Marsden has such a fair, soft skin, such lovely brown eyes, or such a lot of brown hair as Selina. And see what a trim, pretty figure she has, just plump enough to be graceful. Nobody would ever think she was thirty even, to look at her.”

“Just so,” said Granny Cox; “but in those days she wore bright, pretty dresses and ribbons, like other young girls, and all that splendid hair she brushes up in close plaits now, was tossing over her shoulders in long curls. She rode the prettiest horse in those days, and in her white hat and feather and long blue gown, she was the handsomest critter I ever put my eyes on. Deary me! Well, as I was saying, he was faithful to her till his cousin came down from London to visit his mother. The old lady died next year, but she was living then.

“Miss Constance Willmot, the cousin, was tall and large, with great blue eyes and long yellow curls. Folks raved about her beauty, but to me, she never could touch Miss Selina. But, as I was telling you, she come down a visiting, and her cousin was tagging after her everlastingly. Miss Selina was getting ready to be married too, I knew, for I had the doing up of her fine things—pretty they were, too, with her nice little tucks and ruffles. I can’t tell you how it was, only Charles Willmot, he was always with his cousin, and Miss Selina never was the one to run after any man who was slighting her; and the long and short of it was, one day the cousins went up to London together, and next we knew they was married and off to the continent, and Marsden’s never seen sight of them since till last night.”

Never was pie-crust kneaded or rolled with such vicious energy as mine, during the progress of this narrative. I only regretted it was not the faithless lover’s head I was punching and pounding so spitefully. Our Selina. Our gentle, patient, loving sister, who was to us, who passed our lives with her, something absolutely angelic, in her pure loving life! Our Selina so charitable, so winsome, to have been thrown off, insulted and slighted by any man, for the sake of a prettier face perhaps, for *any* cause! It made me hot all over with furious anger to think of it, and I saw Jessie snapping collars and beating starch, with the same overflow of activity that was tingling in my veins.

“Was his cousin rich?” Jessie asked.

“I don’t know. She was a city lady, always dressed to kill, with jewellery enough for a show-case. She sang and played, and all the young men were raving about her. There, I’ve got a tub full; I guess I’ll go hang ’em out.”

“Jessie,” I said, as Granny Cox vanished, “I’d like to wring his neck.”

“He must have been an idiot,” said Jessie with magnificent scorn, “to prefer any woman that ever lived to our Selina.”

The lady in question entering the kitchen at that instant put a stop to further confidences, and we could only vent our feelings again upon pies and starch. But we could and did exchange glances of sympathy, as we noted how very pale our sister looked, and what a far-away, piteous expression there was in her mild, soft eyes.

There was the usual routine of Monday duty to keep us busy, but late in the afternoon, when everything in the house was in order, and Granny Cox had departed, Jessie proposed to take our sewing out into the front porch.

“The warm days will soon be over,” she said, and we admitted the fact, by agreeing to her proposal.

Though we did not speak of it, Jessie and I stole glances now and then at the Willmot house, wondering a little what changes the arrival of its inmates would make amongst us. Selina looked down the road that led past our cottage to the river, a favourite ride and walk with Marsden folks and their visitors. Suddenly we heard her give a cry of deadly fear.

We all started to our feet to see tearing along the road toward us, a runaway horse, with a woman clinging for life to its neck, and another following, with a middle-aged man, with white set face, evidently in pursuit of the runaway. A moment, that seemed an hour was given us to photograph the scene upon our memories, and then the foremost horse rushed like a whirlwind past our gate, throwing his burden on the road as he sped along. We all ran forward to reach the spot where the insensible woman lay, just as the horseman flung himself from his horse beside her.

“Bring her in here,” said Selina, as he lifted her from the ground, “it is nearer than your own house.”

He was a tall, powerful man to whom she spoke, and never answering her he followed us into the house, and into Selina’s own room, where he put the seemingly dead figure on our sister’s snowy bed.

“You have your horse,” Selina said, quietly. “Go as quickly as possible for a physician. We will care for your wife as tenderly as you, Mr. Willmot.”

Without other answer than a low, “God bless you,” Charles Willmot obeyed her leaving his wife to our care. Tenderly Selina undressed her, trying every simple restorative in our reach, calming Jessie and me by her own prompt, decisive movements, and making our strong young arms useful to lift and move the sufferer, as she tried to find the seat of injury.

It seemed hours before the great blue eyes of the stranger were opened, and in that long insensibility I ceased to wonder at any man’s inconstancy, if that face was the one to lead his heart away from its allegiance.

Such perfect beauty of feature I had never seen. Even in its deathly pallor the face was marvellously lovely, and the wealth of golden hair, tossed and disordered, surrounded it like a halo. She opened a pair of large violet eyes, as Selina bent anxiously over her, and looked long and earnestly into our sister’s face before she spoke.

“Selina,” she said, at last, “is it indeed you?”

“It is,” said Selina, simply. “Can you tell me where you are hurt. Your horse threw you at our gate,” she said, answering a questioning look.

“I am not hurt. Ah, yes, I am!” she cried, sinking back, after an effort to rise. “Where is my husband?”

“He is coming now with the doctor,” said Jessie, from her post near the window, and a moment later they entered the room.

We were all sent out excepting Selina, and even my indignant heart pitied the pale man who walked silently up and down our little parlour, waiting to know the physician’s decree. I saw how he suffered. I saw too that this handsome man looked old and worn, compared to our sister, and wondered if he had been happy in his falsehood.

The doctor’s fiat made us all sad and silent, though our guest was a stranger. There were fatal internal injuries. Life might linger for days, even weeks, with tender nursing and care, but the end must be death. Any movement now would probably hasten the dread visitor, and Selina told the husband he must not think of disturbing the sufferer.

“I have not deserved such kindness at your hands,” he said, brokenly: but she only said, in her low, sweet voice:

“You may trust her to me,” and returned again to the bedside.

For three long weeks Mrs. Willmot lingered, suffering frightfully, and Selina nursed her like a sister. If she had been the dearest love of her heart, our sister could not have given her more devoted care, night and day.

The end came in the night. I was sharing Selina’s watch, for our patient sister was nearly worn out with weary care.

Charles Willmot, sitting at his wife’s pillow, watched the failing breath, while Selina, on the other side, gave a stimulant at stated intervals. Suddenly the large, blue eyes opened, and the dying woman spoke:

“Charles, have I been a good wife to you?”

“Always, darling,” he answered.

“Then you will forgive me, though you never loved me as you loved Selina.”

“Constance!” he said, tenderly.

“Never,” she repeated; “but you will forgive me? I cannot die without telling you. I wrote that letter!”

The man turned as white as the dying woman before him.

“I wrote it,” she repeated. “The bitter, cruel letter you thought came from Selina, reproaching you, and breaking off your engagement. Oh, Charles,” she said, as he covered his face, “forgive me. I am dying, and I loved you so! I loved you always, Charles, from a little girl, and I could not loose you.”

There was a deep silence, and again the dying woman spoke:

“Selina, will you also refuse to forgive me?”

“I forgive you freely,” Selina said, “and Charles does too. It grieves him to hear you talk of parting,” she said, in her low, tender voice; and Charles raised his head then and bent to kiss his wife.

Selina drew me gently from the room, and in the sitting-room broke down into piteous weeping. When we returned an hour later, Constance Willmot lay dead in her husband’s arms.

This was all just two years ago. Looking up from my paper, I see Jessie putting away our white dresses and ribbons, the finery we have taken off to-day, having this morning officiated as bride’s maids at the wedding of Charles Willmot and our SISTER SELINA.

ANECDOTE OF MRS. CARLYLE.—A pleasant anecdote is told of Mrs. Carlyle. While Leigh Hunt was strolling one morning in the private grounds of Holland House, a privilege granted to him by Lord Holland—who was a great patron of literary men—he was met by Lord John Russell, then one of Queen Victoria’s Ministers. In the course of conversation the Minister said that the Queen had been pleased to grant Carlyle a pension of two hundred pounds a-year, adding, “As you, Mr. Hunt, are a near neighbour of his, it will perhaps be an agreeable task to be the first to announce the compliment to him.” Leigh Hunt was soon at Cheyne-row, Chelsea, where the author of “Sartor Resartus” resided. Mrs. Carlyle was so delighted with the good news that she threw her arms round the messenger’s neck, and gave him a good hearty “Scotch smack,” as they call a kiss in the land of cakes. The next morning Leigh Hunt sent to Mrs. Carlyle this verse:

“Jenny kissed me when we met,
  Jumping from the chair she sat in;
Time, you thief, who love to get
  Sweets into your book, put that in!
Say I’m ugly, say I’m sad,
  Say that health and wealth have missed me,
Say I’m growing old, but add,
  Jenny kissed me!”

Sometime.

Well, either you or I,
  After whatever is to say is said,
Must see the other die,
  Or hear, through distance, of the other dead,
    Sometime.

And you or I must hide
  Poor empty eyes and faces, wan and wet
With Life's great grief, beside
  The other's coffin, sealed with silence, yet,
    Sometime.

And you or I must look
  Into the other's grave, or far or near,
And read, as in a book
  Writ in the dust, words we made bitter here,
    Sometime.

Then, through what paths of dew,
  What flush of flowers, what glory in the grass,
Only one of us two,
  Even as a shadow walking, blind may pass,
    Sometime!

And, if the nestling song
  Break from the bosom of the bird for love,
No more to listen long
  One shall be deaf below, one deaf above,
    Sometime.

For both must lose the way
  Wherein we walk together, very soon:
One in the dusk shall stay,
  The other first shall see the rising moon,
    Sometime.

Oh! fast, fast friend of mine!
  Lift up the voice I love so much, and warn;
To wring faint hands and pine,
  Tell me I may be left forlorn, forlorn,
    Sometime.

Say I may kiss through tears,
  Forever falling and forever cold,
One ribbon from sweet years,
  One dear dead leaf, one precious ring of gold,
    Sometime.

So you may think with pain
  Of some slight grace, some timid wish to please,
Some eager look half vain
  Into your heart, some broken sobs like these,
    Sometime!

—*Mrs. Miatt.*

Literary Rambler.

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THE FRENCH COOK'S FEAST.

When cook meets cook in friendly professional rivalry it is natural to suppose that the result of the encounter will be a delectable feast. But the French cooks of New York surpassed themselves and expectation on the occasion of their annual supper held in support of the funds of the Société Culinaire Philanthropique. As a rule, a bill of fare affords a minimum of information touching the items of the dinner in exact proportion to the magnificence of the repast. Accepting this test, I need only mention that out of the hundred dishes which on this occasion loaded the tables of the Société Culinaire Philanthropique there figured a *Surprise à la Pycabia*, a *Monstre de Mer à la Neptune*, a *Magasin Samaritaine à la St. Hubert*, *l'Homme des Bois*, a *Mitrailleuse Domestique*, the *Lyre de l'Harmonie* and *le Panier à la Nilsson.* What "The Man of the Woods" might, upon investigation, have turned out to be I do not know, and a similar cloud of mystery broods over the Lyre of Harmony, Madame Nilsson's Panier, and the charitable establishment dedicated to St. Hubert. But it is satisfactory to know that a *Salmon au Veuve de Montpelier*, which also figured in the list of dishes, was an immense salmon in a sugary ocean, supported underneath by a miniature Swiss scene, comprising chalets, bridges, fountains, a lake with live gold fish, huntsmen, and game—all done, except the gold fish, in some mysterious white substance; that the *Monstre de Mer* was a big bass in a wavy, frosted ocean, edged with silver ferns, a large lobster, dressed in collar and knee breeches, riding on the monster's back; and that the *Mitrailleuse Domestique* was nothing more formidable than a "boned turkey," followed by a regiment of cooked squirrels, uniformed in their own skins, and commanded by a big grey squirrel in spectacles. Perhaps the squirrels would have been more convenient to eat if they had been out of uniform, and the collar and knee breeches could not fail to have proved an obstacle in the way of distributing the large lobster. But these are trifling objections, and cannot be held to detract from the success of the supper.—*Sylvanus Urban.*

MEDIÆVAL OUTRAGES ON JEWS.

Westminster Hall and all its ancient environs were thronged with the chivalry and the populace of England when Richard the Lion-hearted was about to take the coronation oath in the presence of his turbulent and barbarous subjects. All the people were summoned to witness the spectacle; but the Jews alone, by a special exception, were forbidden to enter the sacred precinct. It was feared that by spells and sorcery they might bring mischief to the cruel Richard. Some of them, however, strangers perhaps, who were unacquainted with the usages of the time, ventured to mingle with the throng. They hoped to remain undiscovered. They may have thought it their duty to assist at the coronation of the valiant king. But one of them was recognised by a Christian neighbour. The Christian, enraged, ordered him to leave the place, and when he refused struck him a heavy blow. The populace joined in the assault in the very presence of the king, and the unhappy Jew fell dying beneath their inhuman rage. They next chased the Jews, whom they found in the Abbey or its neighbourhood, with fierce imprecations, along the devious roads tha led from Westminster to the Hebrew quarter. The Jews took refuge in their houses. The people, now stimulated by the hope of plunder, broke into the fair mansions around Jewin-street or Gresham, sacked the rich quarter laden with the gold and jewels, the fine robes and rich wares, of the successful traders, inflicted terrible outrages, spared neither sex nor age, and at length set the Jewish houses on fire. All night the flames blazed over mediæval London, threatening the destruction of the city. Richard in vain sent his Chancellor (Glanville) and a troop of horsemen to suppress the tumult. The savage populace pursued their work of robbery and death unmolested. In their rage they even burned or sacked the houses of their fellow-Christians. When there was nothing left to plunder or destroy, they ceased from their dreadful labours. Some of the Jews had found a shelter in the Tower or in the houses of Christian neighbours less savage than the rest of their countrymen. Some were saved by Glanville. But even the lion-hearted Richard did not dare to punish their persecutors. The news of the massacre and robbery at London spread through England. It incited everywhere the wild people to similar outrages. At Oxford, at York, and wherever the Jews had amassed wealth and attracted notice, they were maltreated, robbed, and massacred with hideous malice. Yet they were apparently soon restored to something of their former prosperity, and Richard having laid on them a heavy tax to pay the expenses of his crusade, set out to rescue Jerusalem from the avenging arms of Saladin.—*Harper's New Monthly.*

CURES FOR SCOLDS.

A German dame who let her tongue wag too freely about her neighbours, used to be compelled to stand upon a block in the market-place, with a heavy stone dangling from her neck, shaped either like a bottle, a loaf, an oval dish, or representing a woman putting out her tongue; unless she happen to be rich enough to buy permission to exchange the shameful stone for a bag of hops tied round with red ribbon. In 1637 a woman of Sandwich, in Kent, venturing to take liberties with the good name of Mrs. "Mayoress," had to walk through the streets of the town, preceded by a man tinkling a small bell, bearing an old broom upon her shoulder, from the end of which dangled a wooden mortar. Staffordshire scolds did not get off so easily. They had to follow the bellman until they showed unmistakable signs of repentance, debarred from giving any one a bit of their mind by the branks, or scolds' bridle, an ingenious arrangement of metal hoops contrived to clasp the head and the neck firmly, while the padlock behind remained locked, while a spiked plate pressed upon the tongue, so as effectually to preclude its owner making any use of it. The branks, however, was not peculiar to Staffordshire; it was in use in Scotland centuries ago. In 1574, two quarrelsome Glasgow bodies were bound over to keep the peace, on pain of being "brankit." Pennant says the authorities of Langholm, in Dumfriesshire, always kept one in readiness for immediate use, and plenty of specimens are yet to be seen in different places in England. One preserved at Walton-on-Thames is of thin iron, with a less terrible bit than that of the Staffordshire branks, being only a piece of flat iron some two inches long, to keep the wearer's tongue quiet by simple pressure. This instrument bears the date of 1633 on an inscription running—

Chester presents Walton with a bridle,
To curb women's tongues that talks so idle—

a couplet explained by a story of a Mr. Chester losing an estate through a mischief-making woman's tongue, and commemorating his loss by presenting Walton with its scold's bridle. Dr. Plot, the Staffordshire historian, is loud in his praise of this odd device for reforming clamorous women. "I look upon it," says he, "as much to be preferred to the cucking-stool, which not only endangers the health of the party, but also gives the tongue liberty 'twixt every dip, to neither of which this is liable; it being such a bridle for the tongue as not only quite deprives them of speech, but brings shame for the transgression, and humility thereupon, before it is taken off.—*Chambers's Journal.*

The Ladies' Own Corner.

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HYDE PARK DRESSES.

The *Queen* says: The fashionable world have always had some special rendezvous on Sunday afternoons; but of late years, since the Zoological became no longer the mode, these have frequently changed, and been but little known outside the charmed circle. The Thames has and always will command a number of adherents, and the pleasant little dinners given weekly along its banks are numerous and most enjoyable. The cottage in Kensington Gardens has also always a gay crowd, and a few loiterers linger at the Botanic and Horticultural Gardens; but, during this season, the *crême de la crême* have betaken themselves to shady seats in Hyde-park beneath the trees at the rear of the Achilles statue and facing Stanhope-gate, and a more deliciously cool, breezy locale could scarcely have been devised. It commands a view of the roadway, with the very few carriages that come out on Sundays passing to and fro; and there seems to be a pretty constant stream of pedestrians on the gravel path skirting it from the Marble Arch to Rotten Row. On Sunday last the sun shone brightly for an hour or so, and never, perhaps, save at Hurlingham, were such brilliant dresses to be seen. About half-past six, however, the clouds looked ominous, and chairs, which up to that time had been at a premium, were very quickly deserted. Among the most lovely dresses we may enumerate the following: A prune de monsieur and flesh-coloured silk, the train of the darker shade, the front breadth of the lighter, crossed with bands of the darker, over which fell wide Valenciennes lace; the bodice was of the prune de monsieur shade, with a waistcoat and trimmings of the flesh colour; the bonnet of the round Madame Angot form, matching exactly. This, like most of the dresses, was made exceedingly long and trailed on the ground. There were two or three brown silks, one with a pink silk front and plastron; another with a blue front, froncé and revers; but across this gathered front were bands of brown, fastened on either side with steel buttons. Light blue silk skirts, made with flounces *a la Impératrice*, and a variety of puffings were much worn, with sleeves of the same; and jackets and tunics of embroidered cambric or white China crape, and sometimes black bugled lace or cashmere. Sleeveless jackets of beaded cashmere were very general. Black silks trimmed with "fade" colours, the palest blues and jambe de nymphe, were well worn. We will describe one. The skirt was edged at the back with a broad flounce, and at the waist was a well-arranged sash of light blue silk, revelled at the edge. The front was froncé, with bands of black silk between, on which were bunches of beaded trimming. The bodice was made with a basque, having the same beaded trimmings, and at the back of the neck was a blue lined ruff, which came down the front in the form of a blue lined double fold. With this was worn a black hat, with blue feather. Hats for unmarried ladies were almost universal, and nothing was more becoming than the hat-shaped bonnets. Among these we noticed one of dust-coloured crape, trimmed with an ostrich feather of light yellowy pink, and bands of the same colour covered with Valenciennes. It had a high crown, and was turned up on one side, where was a bunch of rosebuds; the dress worn with it was muslin and silk of the same shade, trimmed with magnificent Valenciennes lace over the yellowy pink. A light canary colour silk had the entire skirt froncé, with bands of black lace in vandykes between each puffing.

LADIES AND CRICKET.

On the subject of ladies and cricket, *The Field* says: "When the attraction of a band is added to the cricket, the proceedings are obviously and demonstratively agreeable to the fair visitors. It is not necessary to press home the circumstance as an argument against what is almost an ungallant suggestion. If the full-grown gentlemen players performing in future at Lord's or Prince's were to become conscious that they were rendering themselves contemptible and ridiculous in the minds of the ladies present, we are afraid that one of two things would happen. Cricket would either fall into disrepute, or a Salique law excluding the sex would be put in operation wherever batting and bowling was carried on. We have no dread of either event occurring. So far from cricket being in any respect a game unworthy of grown-up men, it is eminently suited for them. There is no better recreation for keeping the system in proper health and form, for reducing obesity, for stimulating alike physical functions and mental faculties in a most salutary and agreeable manner. As one of the poets of the craft sings:

It flushes with the glow of health each manly cheek and brow,
It bids the slow and sluggish blood in kindlier currents flow;
It knits the sinews into strength and quickens every eye,
It nerves the hand, renews the heart, and bids all sorrow fly.

That ladies, then, dislike our institution of cricket, as represented by the Universities or by the well known clubs or local clubs is a mistake. That men may possibly devote too much of their time to it, and give up to wickets what was meant for scholarship, is a safe truism. The game is everywhere spreading in popularity, and commanding wider and more universal interest. What the Universities have to do is not to play less cricket, but to play it, on the whole, better than they do at present. They by no means exhibit signs of being fatigued by sound practice, and we trust that the game will lose none of its prestige at either Oxford or Cambridge, at a time when it is more than ever one of the chief national pastimes of England."

WOMEN'S WORK.

Our contemporary goes on to say in reference to women's work: "We should be glad to see a number of employments, now unworthily followed by men, thrown open to women. Where delicacy, tact, and accuracy are needed instead of mere bodily strength, they are the superiors of men; and much of the business of life which is in England discharged by men could be performed, and well performed, as in France, by women. The number of shopmen might surely be diminished, and their places taken by women; and there are other employments of a similar character to telegraphy which might offer a good sphere for them. In the case of the lady correspondent of the *Spectator*, her family would object to her entering into these. If young ladies desire to enter the medical profession, they must, for various reasons, as it appears to us, pursue their training separate from male students; and we feel convinced that, under any circumstances, the number of those who would be willing to enter the ranks of the medical profession would be very limited. There remains emigration. How many girls waste their lives and energies in this country who might find useful and happy occupation in our colonies, with the almost certain hope of becoming wives and mothers. The female labour market is already overstocked, and, with the various social obstacles in the way, the sphere for the employment of women is and must be very limited. Even if they competed with men in every kind of employment in proportion to their numbers, the result would tell unfavourably upon them, for the increased number of labourers in the field would only tend to diminish the wage and pinch the family of many a household."

DRESSING A SOLE.

Under the heading of Fish Cookery, the *Queen* says: For an invalid few better dishes can be found than a boiled sole, and even those of more robust digestions find occasional comfort in this beautifully simple dish, especially if the sole be very large, accompanied by a boat of parsley and butter, fennel, or still better *hollandaise* sauce. Soles big and little may be advantageously served in *sootje* as prescribed for flounders, and it may be observed *en passant* that the trimmings and fringes of soles used for filleting are invaluable for fish stock.

Apart from these primitive methods of cookery, there are four cardinal ways of dressing a sole, that is to say, frying *au vin blanc*, *au gratin*, and *en matelote Normande.* I have so often descanted upon the art and mystery of frying fish, that I need not now dilate upon the necessity for the frying lard being actually boiling before the fish is put in, and for there being abundance of the said *friture* for the fish to swim about in. I will simply endeavour to attach the latter condition to the memory of my readers by recalling the old saying, that "a sole should swim three times; firstly in water, secondly in fat, and thirdly in wine." Whether the sole be simply skinned, cleaned, and floured, or subjected to the more ponderous but really less artistic process of egg and bread-crumbing, a keen attention to these two important particulars will secure the *surprise* or sudden case-hardening necessary to keep in the juices of the fish, and make it a deliciously brown, crisp, and juicy morsel, "as dry as a bone" on the exterior, and as "stiff as a poker," instead of the limp, broken-backed greasy object occasionally encountered at a seaside lodging-house.

Flower and Kitchen Garden.

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KITCHEN GARDEN.

Celery planted early to be earthed up as soon as the plants have attained a good size. If the ground is dry, give a heavy soaking of water the day before intending to mould them, and be careful that the soil is nearly dry, or at most only moderately moist, when the moulding is to be done.

Sow cabbage, green curled endive, lettuce, round spinach.

Winter Greens to be got out in plenty now, as peas, potatoes, and other crops are taken off. Collards, Brussels sprouts, and other quick-growing subjects that will mostly be used before Christmas, to be planted in manured ground; but those to stand till next spring, to furnish sprouts, not to be manured, as it renders them less able to withstand severe frosts. Continue to plant broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Scotch kale, and everything else of the kind from the seed-beds.

FLOWER GARDEN.

Agapanthus to have abundance of water while throwing up flower-spikes, and until the bloom is over; then to be shaken out and parted, and the strongest crowns selected for next year's bloom. Pot these singly in small pots, removing with a sharp knife any of the straggling roots that cannot be got into the pots. The soil should be sandy loam, rotten dung, and peat, equal quantities. Shut them up, and re-shift as soon as the pots are full of roots. The small offsets and the fleshy roots may be used for increase of stock. Plant in shallow pans of sandy peat, and place in a gentle bottom-heat for a fortnight; then separate them, and pot singly in sixties.

Chrysanthemums in the open ground to be topped again, and the soil between them lightly pricked over with a small fork, and some quite rotten dung worked in. It will be found that they always root near the surface, and a dressing of dung will greatly help them, and save the labour of watering.

Phloxes and pentstemons may now be propagated in quantity, and the only satisfactory way is to take cuttings, and get them rooted with as little aid from heat as possible. They may be multiplied in autumn and spring. The usual practice is to propagate pentstemons in autumn and phloxes in spring, but these last may be done in autumn with the others, if young shoots can be got from the base. If the season is a dry one, however, very few can be obtained, but in spring phloxes throw up shoots from the root freely, and if these are shaken off when a few inches long, and potted round the sides of pots, and placed in a gentle heat, they soon make roots, and must then be potted singly. Pentstemons generally produce plenty of nice shoots at the base in autumn, and if these are potted, several together in a pot, and put in frames, they may remain till spring, and be planted out direct from the cutting pots to the places were they are to bloom.

GREENHOUSE AND CONSERVATORY.

Cinerarias coming up in seed-pans to be pricked out as soon as large enough to lift, and have separate thumb-pots, with light rich compost, and be put in a frame to grow on. By securing a vigorous growth from the first they will be less troubled with fly, and make fine specimens. Those who have not sown seed yet must do so at once, or it will be too late.

Fuchsias must be syringed twice a day, and have moderate shade. Fine plants in comparatively small pots will be greatly benefited with weak liquid manure every three or four days. The stock must be propagated now in quantity for next year's supply. The smallest cuttings make the best plants, and there is no need to cut to a joint. A mild bottom-heat will hasten the formation of roots, but it is not needful, as if shut up in a cold frame and kept shaded and regularly sprinkled, they will be well rooted in a fortnight. It is a saving of time in the end to put all cuttings singly in pots at this time of year, as they can be allowed to fill the first pots with roots, so as to grow strong from their first start. In preparing pots for the cuttings, use smallest sixties or thumbs; put a mixture of turf and old dung over the crocks, and fill up with half sand and half leaf-mould, in which the cuttings will root as quickly as in sand alone at this season, and have something to live upon while filling the pots with roots. This is the best method for amateurs who are much away from home, as the single cuttings require less care than when dibbled into sand only in shallow pans.

Hard-wooded plants requiring a shift this season must have it at once, or the time will go by for them to derive full benefit from the operation. The most important matter of all is to secure good drainage, and to use the compost in as rough a state as possible consistent with the size and nature of the plant. Whenever the cultivator is in doubt about the best soil for any hard-wooded plant, he will be pretty safe in using half peat and half loam, both in a turfy and sweet condition, the more elastic the better.

Pelargoniums, as they go out of bloom, to be cut down, and placed in a warm, sheltered, and rather shady place for a week; then to be put in the full sun, and kept rather dry at the root, with occasional sprinklings of the stems and leaves till they break, and then to be repotted back into small pots, with sound lumpy turf to make their new roots in.—*Gardener's Magazine.*

Nick-Nacks.

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SAID a lady to her husband during the late panic in America, "I am not afraid but that we shall have enough to live on. I believe that we shall be provided for if we only trust in Providence." To which the husband replied, "Well, you'll divide with the children, won't you? and I will look out for myself the best I can."

ONCE upon a time, Macready, the tragedian, made a visit to America. He played many parts, among others that of "Shylock," which was considered one of his best. An innovator in some respects, he was rigid as regards correctness of costume, and always refused to distinguish himself from his fellow actors by any peculiarity in his garb. He dressed for "Shylock" as he would have dressed for "Tubal," and insisted that there should be no difference in the costume of the two characters. He was playing "Shylock" one night, and leaving the stage at the end of an act, proceeded to his dressing-room to rest. As he was ascending the stairs which led thereto he was mistaken for "Tubal" by the stage carpenter, who crept behind him softly, and gave him, by way of a lark, what he afterwards called a boosting blow. He turned suddenly, to the great horror of the carpenter, who exclaimed, "I beg pardon, I thought it was Jobson"—Jobson being the actor who played "Tubal." "Good Heavens, sir," said the tragedian, "Does Mr. Jobson like that sort of thing?"

A GOOD many stories of stammerers are told, but none of recent date better than the following of Platt Evans, of Cincinnati: It was one of his pleasures to teach his friends how to purchase tender geese, though he could not always get them in the market. One morning he saw a lot, and inquired of the farmer how many there were. "About a dozen," was the reply. "W-w-well," said Platt, "I, k-k-keep b-boarding-house, and my b-b-boarders are the biggest e-eaters you ever s-s-saw. P-p-pick out n-n-nine of the t-t-toughest you've g-g-got." The farmer complied, and laid aside the other three tender ones. Platt picked them up carefully, and putting them in his basket, said "I b-b-believe I'll t-t-take these three."

A VERY comical sentence was recently found in the programme of a concert given in London by M. Gounod: "Song: 'She Wandered Down the Mountain Side,' accompanied by the composer;" and at another concert in New York a young lady was announced to sing "the favourite song, 'An Angel's Whisker!'"

BOARDS, commissions, and other public bodies, have been the subject of so much banter for allowing themselves dinners, luncheons, &c., out of the money entrusted to them, that they have become as sensitive on the point of refreshment as the servant girl who left her sweetheart at a dance and returned home in a huff, because "he asked her whether her programme was full—when she had only had two sandwiches."

IT is possible—barely possible—though w doubt it, that two epitaphs more extraordinary than the following can be found:

ELIZABETH,
the wife of Richard Barklamb,
passed to Eternity on Sunday, 21st May, 1797,
in the 71st year of her age.
RICHARD BARKLAMB,
the Anti-spouse Uxorious,
was interred here 27th January, 1806,
in his 84th year
WILLIAM BARKLAMB.
Brother to the preceding,
September 5th, 1799, aged 68 years.
When terrestrial all in chaos shall exhibit effer-
vescence,
Then celestial virtues with their full, effulgent,
brilliant essence,
Shall with beaming beauteous radiance through th
ebullition shine,
Transcending to glorious regions, beatificial, sub-
lime;
Then human power absorbed, deficient to delineat
such effulgent lasting sparks,
Where honest plebeians ever will have precedenc
over ambiguous great monarchs.

Mike was in tempur and in sole sinsere
Ann Husband tendur and a fathur deere
He was a fathur kind
And modist was his mind
A great blessin to a umman
Never mor was givn
Nor a greeter loss eksept the loss of heavn.

THE "EDITOR'S DRAWER," in *Harper's Monthly*, contains the following: The good Henry Bergh, whom everybody knows and loves for his devotion to dumb animals, has much dry humour, which shows itself when least expected. The story of his commiseration for the feelings of the mule, instead of the drunken man who sunk on the animal's back in a bog, has already been made public. The following equally illustrate his wit: General D—— says that several years ago, at the time when Mr. Bergh first originated the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, on waking up one morning his ears tingled with the piteous cries of an unfortunate cat, which, in climbing a tree in the general's yard in pursuit of some birds in a nest, had become permanently entangled in a branch about thirty feet from the ground. The general put on his hat and went to Mr. Bergh's office. Finding that gentleman in, he stated the case. Mr. Bergh touched a bell, and ordered the attendant at once to proceed with a long ladder and relieve the cat. "Stop a moment, Mr. Bergh," said the general. "Is the cat entitled to any consideration? She went up the tree after the little birds." "My dear sir," replied the great zoophilist, "*let us not scrutinise too closely the motives of that cat.*" And the ladder was sent.

MOODY AND THE HIGHWAYMAN.—Moody, the actor, was robbed of his watch and money. He begged the highwayman to let him have cash enough to carry him to town, and the fellow replied, "Well, Master Moody, as I know you, I'll lend you half a guinea; but, remember, honour among thieves!" A few days after he was taken, and Moody, hearing that he was at the "Brown Bear," in Bow-street, went to inquire after his watch; but when he began to speak of it, the fellow exclaimed, "Is that what you want? I thought you had come to pay the half-guinea you borrowed of me!"

IMPROMPTU.—On an apple being thrown at Mr. Cooke, whilst playing "Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant"—

Some envious Scot, you say, the apple threw,
Because the character was drawn too true;
It can't be so, for all must know "richt weel,"
That a true Scot had only thrown the *peel.*

ONCE when a clergyman reading the buria service, came to the place where he must sa "our deceased brother (or sister)." He did no know which; so turning to a mourner he asked whether it was a "brother" or a "sister?" The mourner innocently said, "no relation at all, sir, only an acquaintance."

LORD KAMES, returning from the north circuit to Perth, happened one night to sleep at Dunkeld. The next morning, walking towards the ferry, but apprehending that he had missed his way, he asked a man whom he met to accompany him. The other answered with much cordiality: "That I will do with all my heart, my lord. Does not your lordship remember me? My name's John ——; I have had the honour to be before your lordship for stealing sheep." "Oh, John, I remember you well; and how is your wife? She had the honour to be before me, too, for receiving them, knowing them to be stolen." "At your lordship's service. We were very lucky, we got off for want of evidence; and I am still going on in the butcher trade." "Then," replied his lordship, "we may have the honour of *meeting again.*"—*Book of Scottish Anecdote.*

ANECDOTE OF FOOTE.—The lower frontage of Fleet Prison used to be occupied by struggling barbers and other starvelings. One of the barbers was a man of more than ordinary wit, and when a glass pane happened to be broken he ingeniously put a paper pane in its place. On these pieces of brown paper he scrawled sundry legends, more or less pertinent to his occupation, but mostly of a humorous character, such as—

"Here lives Jemmy Wright;
Shaves as well as any man in England—
Almost, not quite."

Foote, passing the place one day, and seeing these odd rhymes thought to have some sport with the witty barber, and popping his head through one of the *paper* panes gravely enquired, "Is Jemmy Wright within?" The barber, appreciating the joke, immediately popped his head through another paper pane, and rejoined, "No, sir, he has just popped out." Foote, adds the chronicler, gave the fellow a guinea for his smartness.

A GOOD story was told of Mademoiselle Page, who, thirty years ago, was one of the chief attractions of the Vaudeville Theatre, of Paris, and a bright particular star in such *salons* of fashion and nobility as she condescended to flatter with her presence. The beautiful actress was a fearless rider, a bold hunter, and one of the best pistol-shots in the kingdom. Her exploits in the shooting-gallery were much spoken of. Slightly connected with the shooting-gallery is the adventure we have to relate, and one which afforded much amusement at the time. A certain wealthy banker of Paris pestered her exceedingly. Through his wealth he gained access to the stage of the Vaudeville, where, behind the scenes, he fervently declared his love. She, however, with utter dislike and disgust, flatly refused him. On the following day the banker wrote her a letter, praying her to reconsider her determination. The actress took this letter to the shooting-gallery, and having read it to her friends, she caused it to be pinned up at thirty paces distant, when she proceeded to put half-a-dozen bullets through it. She then put the riddled letter into an envelope, with the following billet, and sent it by a servant: "Mademoiselle Page has riddled the enclosed letter with pistol-shots at thirty paces. If the writer annoys her again, in any way whatever, she will riddle his head at half the distance." The banker was wise! He accepted the situation, and thereafter kept at a respectful distance from Mademoiselle Page.

THE
Mystery of Ashleigh Grange.

(Continued from Page 5.)

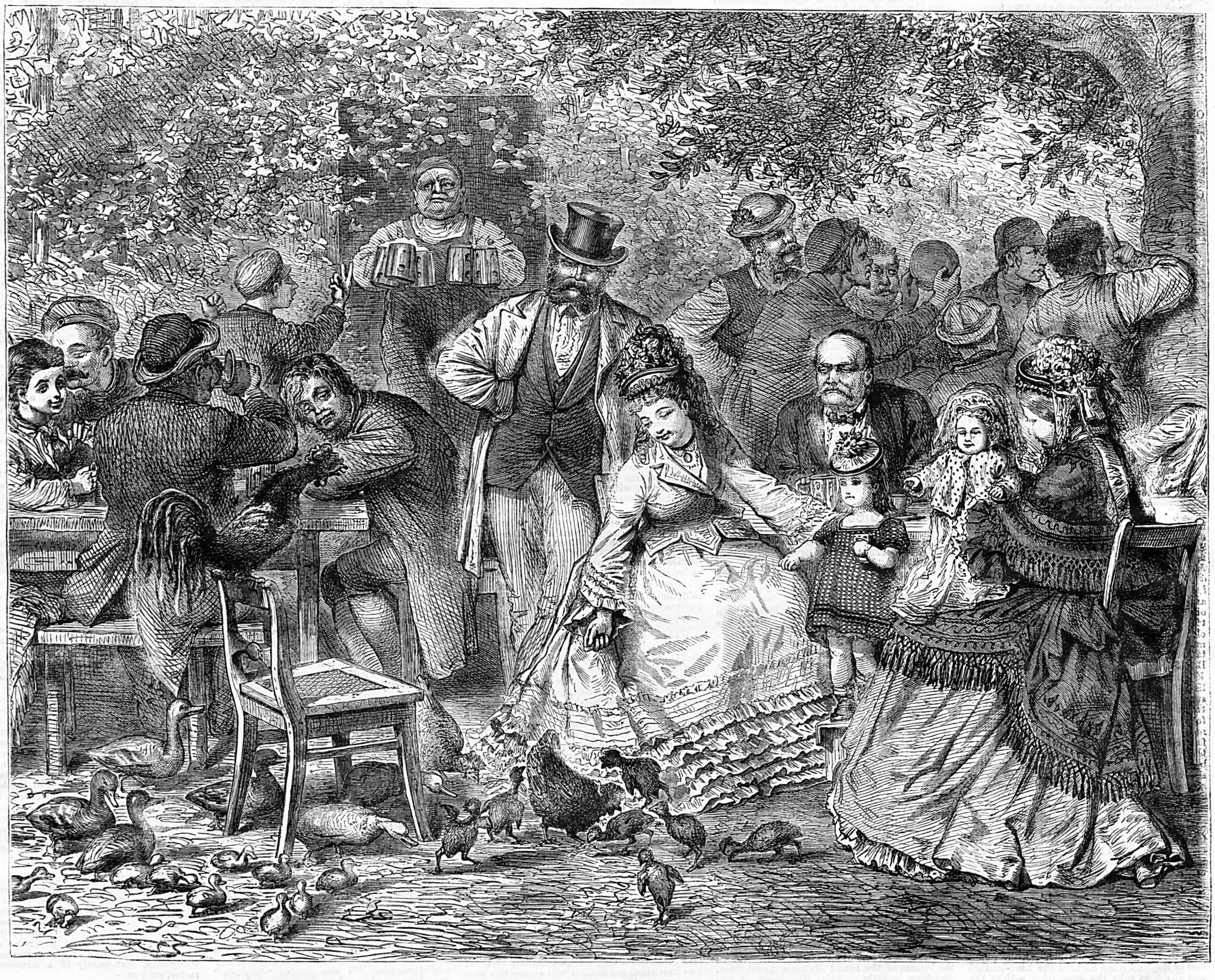
Had he remembered this man or the other—the cousin of whom he could have had no cognisances—the far-removed relative of whom he had never even heard?

But these poor wretched folk watched on, and waited and hoped, wiped the perspiration from their hot brows, and presented to the onlooker (who could gain or lose nothing by that last will and testament) a spectacle of wretched, trembling eagerness he could never hope to look on except under such circumstances as here.

Philip sat gazing out of the deep, broad windows on to the lawn.

He had an instinctive knowledge of what his fate was to be—that in the event he should be left out in the cold, a beggar to wander through the world hand in hand with that most wretched of all companions—poverty.

But somehow this did not affect him.



A GERMAN BIER-GARTEN.

What hope had he in the future surely was not much; but in the present he was not in the mood to grieve.

That excellent luncheon, the choice wine: ah! that was it.

An hour or two since, and he was ready to curse the world for its coldness and unkindness. Now the case was different. Who dared to say there was a difficulty with the butcher or the baker—who should record the fact that the landlord of the "Mitre" would not trust him for a quart of ale, and he and his wife (poor Netty) went supperless to bed?

What and who around would raise such a skeleton as this? Was he not Philip Ashleigh, of Ashleigh Grange, with servants at his beck and call, and men ready and eager to wait upon him?

Those were the prevalent ideas—the thoughts that suggested themselves to him as he listened lazily to the long and meaningless jargon of Mr. Mount.

Never surely was the last will and testament of mortal man so hedged about with legal technicalities and provisions.

The sneer on Philip's features deepened almost into laughter as he listened to this monstrous folly—this heaping up of word upon word, of which no ordinary person could make sense or reason.

But this pompous nonsense came to an end at last. The property was described (still in the same senseless, unintelligible language) and Philip caught the sound of familiar names.

Despite his wrecklessness, the memory of his boyhood—the remembrance of the farms and lands, chained his attention whether he would or no.

Still in the same monotonous tone Mr. Mount read on, the older lawyer, Mr. Gilkins, of Ashleigh, listening attentively and furtively, checking off the items on his fingers as the other proceeded.

Now and again this aged man would glance at Philip with a curious and pitying look, very suggestive of some knowledge sacred to him alone.

It did not disturb the serenity of the shabbily-attired younger son. His eyes were fast losing their brightness. The wine was taking effect; and he was undeniably drowsy.

Had it not been indecorous, he would have fallen fast asleep, and perhaps snored.

But his glance was rivetted presently on the mumbling reader.

There was no mistake in the name, or the look rapidly cast upon him by Mr. Mount, as if to claim his attention to the last words of his parent.

"To my son, Philip Ashleigh," thus ran the document, "I bequeath the estate, freehold and copyhold, of Slingsby Dyke, together with all rights and interest therein; and it is my wish that he may reside on the property, and settle down into a country gentleman."

Philip flashed red-hot as he heard this, and held out his hand to Reginald, who pressed it sympathisingly.

The words rang and murmured in his ears like the refrain of a well-remembered song.

Slingsby Dyke! the prettiest and most picturesque part of the whole estate—the best shooting, the most fertile land.

True, it was but a corner of the property—a small part of the enormous wealth collected by his father; still, it was a good twelve-hundred a-year rental free of tax and tithe.

He never heard another word of that reading for a full half hour.

He was brimming over at heart—full of joy for the sake of Netty and her future.

How long he sat and dreamed he never knew. But of one thing he was certain, and that was the expression of Reginald's white-drawn features as again the name of Philip Ashleigh was read out.

Mr. Gilkins had risen in great excitement, and was peering over Mr. Mount's shoulder.

The poor relations had settled down into dreary misery, for not one of them had been mentioned, and the document was finished.

It seemed a refinement of cruelty to allow these wretched folk to assemble to be tortured thus; but there was no help for it. It always has been the case and probably will be till the sands of time have run out.

Be that as it may, the will was finished, and Mr. Mount, in a slow, regretful voice was reading the codicils—those little additions that have ruined so many hopes—the trifling alterations made by the testator as he is affected by the weather or by his health, or a fancied slight on the part of some grovelling object who expects to become a legatee.

So Mr. Mount read out the after-thoughts and provisions of Philip Ashleigh, of Ashleigh Grange.

He deliberately revoked his bequest to his son Philip, leaving to him the sum of one shilling sterling; and to his niece, Mina, he "devised and bequeathed the estate of Slingsby Dyke, with all rights and priviliges appertaining thereto."

Even the poor relations forgot their disappointment in astonishment at this unexpected declaration.

They stared at Philip, one and all, as though he were a wild man of the woods—a human being of a unique and envious kind.

For Philip himself, the shock was so great that he could not for a moment feel its intensity.

He looked on with a vague wonder in speechless astonishment as the lawyer folded up the will preparatory to taking it away.

Then, as Mr. Mount placed it in his breast-pocket, the young man spoke in a voice of forced calmness.

"Do I understand you to say," he questioned, "that my father has given *me* Slingsby Dyke, and then taken it away again, and finally left it to my cousin? Is that so, Mr. Mount?" he asked, still in the same calm and equable tone.

"I regret to say, Mr. Philip," replied the gentleman addressed, "that owing, perhaps, to circumstances known only to you and your late estimable and worthy parent——"

"That will do," interrupted Philip, with a stern nod; "answer the question—yes or no!"

Mr. Gilkins spoke in reply.

"I made the alterations, Mr. Philip—a-hem—a few days before the decease of the late most highly respected—a-hem——"

"Am I to understand," again interrupted Philip, "that I am cut off with a shilling, sir; or am I the owner of Slingsby Dyke? For the sake of common sense, answer in one word—yes or no!"

Mr. Mount now replied to the question.

"Mr. Philip," he said, in a changed voice, with the quiet serious manner of a well-wisher, "I wish things had turned out differently, but you must face the truth."

"And that is?" demanded Philip.

"That you are practically disinherited—that, beyond the formal bequest of one shilling, you are left penniless."

"What a mockery!" roared Philip, almost screaming with hysterical laughter. "Regy," he cried, "give me the shilling; it will at least buy me a mouthful of bread and cheese on my tramp to London."

Notwithstanding his strange burst of mirth, there were great tears stealing down his cheeks as he turned into the recess of the window.

Mina came to him and whispered almost lovingly.

Reginald kindly placed his hand upon his shoulder.

They might as well have tried to stem an advancing tide as to reason with Philip just then.

Through his mind flitted that scene in the morning. He saw himself once again a poor shabby outcast—out of elbows—the spirit of old times being rapidly crushed out of him by the grinding, bitter curse of poverty!

He would have none of their council—heeded not their comforting words; but turned like a wild beast at bay.

His countenance had turned to a dull, unwholesome red; his lip quivered, and a dewy perspiration broke out on his forehead.

His very raiment seemed shabbier and more patched, and his much-worn boots appeared more dilapidated than heretofore.

He strode out into the middle of the room, and took his hat from the table.

It was so bad a specimen of head-gear that he had positively been ashamed to leave it in the hall; and so here it was, with the crape-band hanging over the side almost reaching the ground.

They crowded round, looking at him, wondering what was to come.

He did not leave them long in suspense.

With a trembling hand he tore the crape from it—denting and crushing the well-worn hat—then, with a low bitter curse, he crumpled the emblems of grief into the smallest space, threw them on the ground, and stamped on them with all his might.

"Philip!" cried Reginald, "for God's sake, consider. All shall be done that can be done for you. You will not be a sufferer by one penny. Mina will not accept——"

He stopped here, for, with a growl, Philip faced him, still keeping his foot upon the hat-band on the floor.

"My curse upon the house," he hissed; "upon the false hearts that have plotted and planned this infernal robbery. I wouldn't take a shilling from one of the name of Ashleigh if I was dying of starvation. My last word is a prayer for a curse to fall upon you both!"

He glared around—his every feature twitching with convulsive emotion—his hands clasped as though ready to fight the battle now and at once.

"Philip," cried Mina; "dear Philip!"

Reginald held her back.

"Give him time. Do not speak to him now," he whispered.

She shrank away; and again Philip looked round.

"Farewell to Ashleigh Grange," he said. "Good-bye to the life of respectable folks such as you. Gentility has eaten the heart out of you, and you can rob a brother with smiling faces, as a father can rob his son and die in peace."

He smoothed his hat round with his coat sleeve, and looked down upon the crape at his feet.

Once again he glared around, seeming to take cognisance of each and all of the pale countenances of the crowd now gazing upon him in speechless wonder and afright.

Then deliberately, with a cold measured aim, he spat contemptuously on the crape at his feet, and slowly, without another look around him, strode from the room.

Reginald coloured to the roots of his hair, and Mina clung to him in dismay, as a low murmur of honour ran through the crowd.

They dispersed after this, each one going their several ways in strange reflective moods.

Meanwhile Philip made his way to the inn, passing, though unknowingly, Mr. Nat Rolla, who was lying just inside the leafy wood.

That worthy regarded him anxiously. He heard him speak in bitter soliloquy, as he raised his hand to his aching head.

"I don't care for myself," were the words he heard; "but for you, Netty, my tender, gentle girl."

He happened to turn his head; and some expression of his features must have disturbed Mr. Rolla very powerfully indeed.

He watched him for a moment, then sprang up and clenched his fist, while curses, not loud but deep, issued from his lips and relieved his labouring breast.

"Your Netty, your Netty," vengefully muttered Mr. Rolla, in a voice of concentrated rage, "why I'd ——"

He laughed chuckingly, and crept away, leaving the sentence unfinished.

During this unrehearsed scene, Philip had reached the inn, hot and feverish.

"Bring me some brandy," he said to the landlord, "and a pen, ink, and paper. I suppose," he continued, "if I haven't enough to pay you for a night's lodging I can score it up?"

"See here," responded mine host, in somewhat injured tones, "I aint a rich man; but I'll let you have every shilling in my house, and the brewer may whistle for his money, only say the word."

But Philip did not answer. He leant his head upon the table and waved his hand feebly.

The landlord took it respectfully and tried to comfort him.

"The funeral is over," he muttered musingly; "the sooner I get back to town the better. I never thought the country so beautiful before," he said lightly to the host. "I will devote this evening to a ramble through the dear old woods."

A clatter was heard at the door, and a customer entered.

"If you don't mind, sir," whispered the landlord respectfully to the new comer," as he met him on the threshold, "I'd rayther you went into the other room. I've a gentleman in here as won't care about being disturbed."

Mr. Rolla—for it was him—smiled.

"Of course," he answered pleasantly. "Give me a draught of ale, and I am off home; for I am both hungry and tired."

The landlord served him, followed him to the door, and bade him "good evening."

"Good evening," responded Mr. Rolla, who departed in the direction of the keeper's cottage.

"I say," remarked Philip to the landlord musingly—"who was that in the passage just now? I surely knew his voice."

"I think not, sir," answered mine host. "He is quite a stranger in these parts, and is lodging at Dancer's."

"Oh then I am mistaken," said Philip. "Well, they have cut me off with a shilling after all," he added with a sickly smile.

The vintner murmured a respectful condolence; and Philip wrote his letter.

What a change would be wrought before that letter reached its destination.

(To be continued.)